

On Top Of The News

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Monday, November 2, 2009

Aruba's newly inaugurated Minister of Tourism, Transport & Labor, Otmar Oduber

SITE International Conference 2009 is opened by Minister Oduber

PALM BEACH - On the wake of being sworn in on Friday, October 29 as Minister of Tourism, Transport and Labor, Otmar Oduber expressed his pleasure to the more than 250 delegates from around the world that his first official act was representing Aruba at the opening of the General Session of SITE International Conference 2009, which took place in the ballroom of the Westin Aruba Resort the following Saturday morning.

Minister Oduber expressed that this annual conference of the Society of Incentive and Travel Executives "will be engrained in my memory forever." He also admitted it had a poignancy, as his late brother, Simon "Rudito" Oduber, was instrumental in bringing SITE University to Aruba in 1993.

The General Session was hosted by SITE Immediate Past President Padraic Gilligan of Ovation Global DMC. The morning's speakers included Fay Beauchine of Carlson Marketing, discussing "Events and Motivational Traveling," with an eye towards trends in North America, while Andreas Span of IBM Deutschland examined the European perspective. Guest Keynote Speaker for this year was Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations

World Tourism Organization, Professor Geoffrey Lipman. "World Watch," was the general topic of the morning's session.

Professor Lipman opened the discussion with an overall evaluation of the current global economy and its effects on travel, incentive travel in particular, along with the socio-economic impact of the incentive travel and tourism industry, and the positive role and responsibility an organization such as SITE maintains in encouraging destinations towards "going green." Preservation of the world's resources and climate is a major issue, and the travel industry, in Professor Lipman's opinion, does have the power to influence positive change.

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Minister otmar oduber with Patrick Sullivan SITE President and Brenda Anderson SITE CEO.
JPG

At The Village in Palm Beach

Island culture and Halloween provide a memorable night for SITE delegates



THE VILLAGE - The tropical air crackled with excitement as delegates from the Society of Incentive and Travel Executives

enjoyed an authentic taste of Aruban hospitality and cuisine, along with some of the fun filled insanity found on the streets on Halloween this past Saturday night.

Continued on Next Page



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SITE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2009 OCTOBER 30 - NOVEMBER 2



Island culture and Halloween provide a memorable night for SITE delegates



for an energetic show of "Thriller." The night ended with guests being award



piratical accoutrements so as to join in the Halloween fun surrounding them at The Village, for a full night



Continued from Front Page

The evening began with a demonstration and dance symbolizing Aruba Amerindian forebears, while SITE visitors sampled popular local dishes such as Chicken Satay and Kropoek,

Carni Stoba, and Dutch Pea Soup along with regional desserts that reflected the diversity and influences of island cuisine.

The band Acoustic Soul had everyone dancing to popular local music along

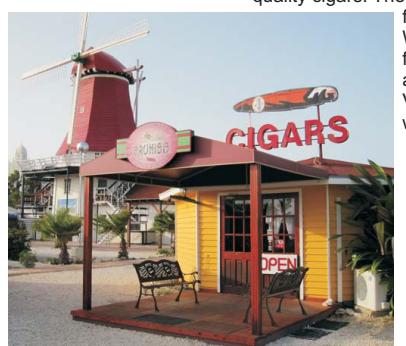
with a medley of favorite international golden oldies. The evening took a dramatic turn as Halloween took over the festivities and the audience was treated to a ghostly visit by Michael Jackson and his ghouls

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ORANJESTAD- Benjamin Petrocchi started the newest export product of Aruba, locally produced cigars called "Aruhiba". These cigars are produced and cultivated in Aruba.

Petrocchi has always had an interest in the cigar business and has also sold Premium Cuban Cigars, and now he is growing his own tobacco crop. After many attempts and trips to Santo Domingo and Cuba he started his own production and cultivation of Aruhiba Cigars in Aruba. The process took ten years. Petrocchi dedication to the cigars is important for the molding and process of making a perfect cigar which takes a long time. The cigar box is specially designed for the cigars with the logo "Aruhiba". Petrocchi considers Aruhiba a promotion for Aruba through fine quality cigars. The company sells International cigars as well. Buy a gift box of Aruhiba Corona with five cigars and you will get 1 FREE cigar of \$35. Located at the Historic Dutch Windmill. Open on Sunday from 9am to 8pm. And also at Tamarijn Hotel open from 9am to 1pm. Aruhiba is only available in above mentioned stores. Visit our authentic tobacco farm where cigars are handmade.



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SITE International Conference 2009 is opened by Minister Oduber

Continued from Front Page

Regarding the present state of the global economy and its effects on the tourism industry, he opened his remarks by warning his audience, "You can't judge anything by the news headlines. What is a headline today of good news, tomorrow could be a headline of bad news. We all want to be optimistic...sometimes you have to temper that optimism with a healthy dose of realism." He continued by complimenting SITE on their choice of location for this year's conference. "There isn't a better spot than the Caribbean to contemplate tourism's resilience to economic recession and the first signs of recovering in 2010." Because the Caribbean is the most tourism-centric economy in the world, it is the ideal location to "look beyond the economics to the big challenges and opportunities from the continuing stimulus packages and the longer term transformation to a green economy."

Generally, tourism is approximately 30% of the GDP contribution to Caribbean nations; for Aruba it is closer to 70%. "For the Caribbean, without our sector of the economy, everything goes black; this is compared to around 6-12% on a global basis. The patterns of impact are the same, but not as intense," explained Professor Lipman. "Tourism accounts for 1 in 3

jobs. In Aruba, we must assume 70% of the work available. This is exceptionally significant because unemployment is going to be the biggest single economic challenge now that the banking crisis is under some measure of control."

"The timing for this conference is also pertinent," Professor Lipman mentioned, as some economists are suggesting recovery in 2010, and the U.S. figures show positive growth for the third quarter of 2009, the first cessation of negative growth in a year. "However, we should be very careful," he warned "because the same IMF report and the OECD suggest that unemployment will keep rising, and we are not going to see an end until the end of 2011 or 2012; this is enormously significant."

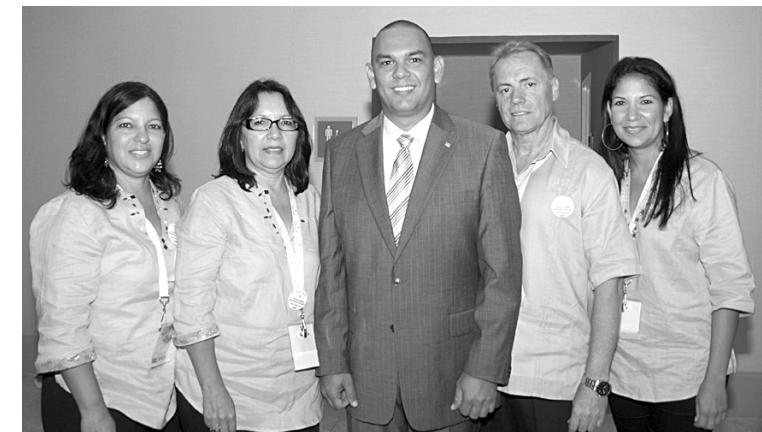
It appears that economists differ as to the shape of the graphs that will track the world and tourism economy over the next few years. It may be a "W" with sharp ups and down, or the sign for a square root, with a short, sharp rise, and then a plateau. Professor Lipman quoted Winston Churchill in saying "If you give me to two different economists in the same room, I will get two different opinions." In his opinion, there is no certain prediction for the economic outcome of the next six months.

After comparing both economic and corporate weaknesses in regards to

recovery, he reiterated that when it comes, a primary concern is global environmental responsibility by the travel industry and the necessity of affecting a switch to alternative energy sources, as climate change is an authentic threat to the next generation.

Fay Beauchine brought forward a slightly more positive note. In survey results it was demonstrated that when people can put aside money to accumulate disposable income, their #1 goal is to take a vacation, accounting for 56% of those polled

Unfortunately, the morning's presentations went beyond their time scheduled, so a panel discussion with questions from the audience was postponed. Summing up, Professor Lipman expressed he was not attending SITE with any firm vision for the immediate future,



but wished to share something examined by the UNWTO recently.

"This recession is deeper than anything we have seen in 30 years, and probably as deep as the Great Depression." Examining graphs have demonstrated emerging markets in smaller economies, such as India and China, are recovering quicker than established, developed economies, which fuel the growth of the travel sector.

He reported this analysis by one of the leading UN economists, which reminds the tourism industry that "Current economies are supported by extraordinary government stimulus measures. Financial systems are likely to stay dysfunctional for some time. Neither consumers nor business are in a position to spend because debt remains high and unemployment is still rising." □



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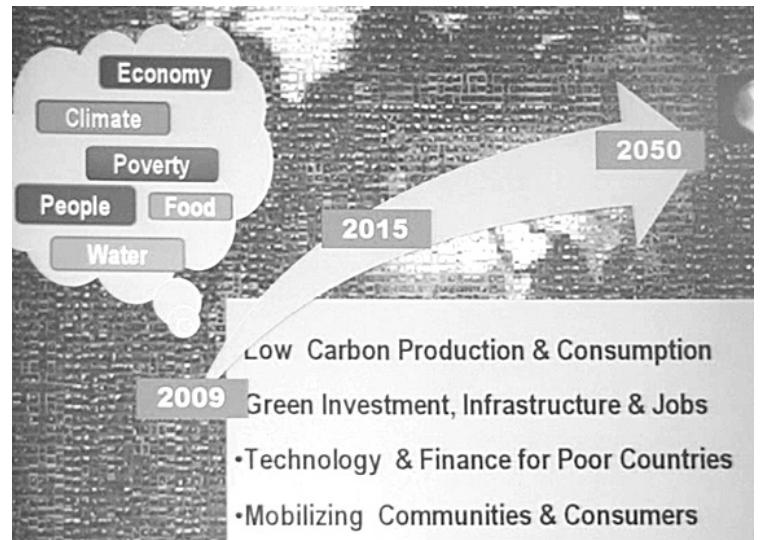
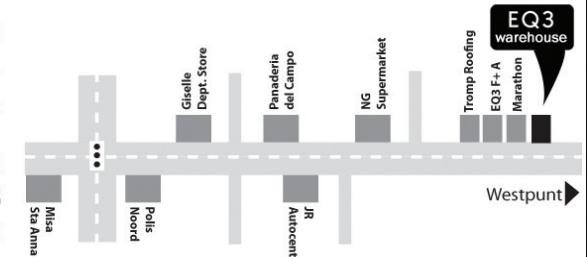
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SITE Crystal Awards honor innovation in motivational travel



PALM BEACH - Over the past weekend, the Society of Incentive and Travel Executives have been conducting their annual conference at the Westin and Radisson Resorts in Palm Beach. An important part of the event is recognizing originality in motivational travel planning, which inspires the thousands of members of SITE to innovation and superior planning and execution on behalf of their clients. The awards recognize "the unique blending of objectives and imagination that

enables motivational programs to be successful in achieving business objectives."

SITE CEO Brenda Anderson and President Patrick Sullivan performed the pleasant task of awarding the coveted SITE Crystal Awards to seven recipient operations during an elegant luncheon in the Westin Aruba Ballroom on Saturday afternoon. A panel of twenty-three judges evaluated the entries to select the winners, which were selected not only on the originality of the programs,

but also efforts to bring forward experiences which contribute to the societies they impact and also keep in mind the SITE policy of encouraging the attitude of "going green."

The first to collect a Crystal Award was Jane E. Schultdt, on behalf of World Marketing Group and Singapore Airlines, for their program "Global University." They created an educational experience for qualified MICE planners "that would be so motivating guests would choose to participate and share in the investment needed to create behavioral

change."

Master Events and Designer Incentives, represented by Elie Lores Blanes and Samir Uberoi claimed an award for "India, Land of a Billion Smiles" organized for Coca-Cola Enterprises of Belgium. The journey was reward recognition with the aim to motivate managers of a major supermarket chain.

Harith Productions won for their Iceland trip "Country of Contrasts," on behalf of King Pharmaceuticals. Accepting the award was Marin Magnusdottir and Ingolfer Haraldsson, who encouraged the audience to come visit them in "the coolest country in the world."

Creative Travel India and Duo Turismo Sao Paulo made SITE history with the "First-Ever Brazil to India Incentive Trip" for Garoto Chocolates VIP's, which showcased the power of the destination, and won them a Crystal Award; Rajeev Koli proudly accepted.

Terra Nova arranged a number of very empowering motivation hikes to observe the breathtaking nature in the Drakensberg Range in South Africa for the employees of Reckitt Benckiser. The travelers had a true sense of native culture from the moment of their arrival, another goal of SITE, and provided what the client described as "once-in-a-

lifetime experiences."

Fay Beauchine of Carlson Marketing Worldwide and Kurt Paben received an award for the environmentally-conscious Recognition Program organized for Sun Microsystems. Paper schedules and agendas were replaced with giant screens that offered instant recognition of delegates through their PDA's and mobile phones, and necessary information was then instantly sent to their hand held devices. Not only was this money saving for Sun, but reduced their carbon footprint.

The final award was presented to Dragonfly Africa for the African Leaders Conference organized for the Securian Financial Group. This included a socially enriching project of visiting the Ebenezer Child Care Trust, an orphanage which now is the beneficiary of Securian's support and care. Participants report the experience has changed their lives and raised social consciousness.

SITE also recognized their Minnesota chapter as the winner of the 2009 Chapter Challenge for Crystals, which is awarded for the highest number of entries. Their reward is a donation to support the chapter and one complimentary registration in this year's international conference. □

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DP: Lack of action on A/H1N1 a threat to people, economy

~ Submits questions to ExCo ~

PHILIPSBURG -- The Democratic Party faction of the Island Council has written to the Executive Council seeking answers concerning the H1N1 Influenza type A virus (A/H1N1) and its threat to the people and economy of St. Maarten.

"Particularly in the United States, the virus, according to media reports, has spread to 46 states [and] doctors' visits have increased steeply while hospitalisation and deaths continue to increase. Considering this development, St. Maarten should be monitoring the developments locally very closely, as an increase in the US means that it is a matter of time before we experience an increase here," DP Councilwoman Maria Buncamper-Molanus said.

The former Commissioner of Health explained that the Dutch Minister of Public Health had announced she had made 34 million euros available to purchase the vaccine for A/H1N1 that was now available.

The amount of vaccine, according to the Dutch Public Health Minister, is

sufficient to vaccinate the Dutch and Netherlands Antillean population twice. "But it is being advised to provide specific, vulnerable target groups in the community with the vaccine. These groups include persons with medical risks for the annual seasonal flu, all persons age 60 and over and pregnant women who are already in their third trimester," she said.

Also, health care workers who have direct contact with at-risk patients are considered persons who should be vaccinated. While the volume of vaccine expected earlier this year has apparently not become available as yet, the question, according to Buncamper-Molanus, is what the government of St. Maarten is doing about it.

In that context, the Democratic Party would like the Executive Council to answer the following questions: Is the Executive Council monitoring the spread of the A/H1N1 closely?

How many A/H1N1 cases have we had in St. Maarten to date, [and], if available, can the report be provided

to the Island Council? Has Government or any other entity in St. Maarten been able to secure any of the vaccine from the Dutch Government or through any other means or from any other source for the Island Territory of St. Maarten? Has a plan been devised in which, in particular, the at-risk groups of our population – the elderly, health care workers, expecting mothers, etc. – are able to get vaccinated? The Dutch Public Health Advisory Council has advised against providing the entire

Dutch population with the vaccine.

As such, the DP asked if the Executive Council had given any consideration to this advice as it pertained to St. Maarten, considering the fact that St. Maarten was a tourism destination receiving most of its visitors from a destination in which A/H1N1 has spread so widely.

The Executive Council was also asked if it considered everyone working in the tourism sector to fall within "persons at risk," and as a result, would a

recommendation or decision be made to have all these persons vaccinated?

"The Democratic Party considers it of utmost importance that these questions be addressed promptly as all indications are that the situation is escalating rapidly. The people of St. Maarten and the economy of St. Maarten could be at risk if A/H1N1 is not taken seriously and the prevention of its spread is not dealt with effectively," Buncamper-Molanus concluded. □



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New teams try their luck at Plaza Quiz Night Series

ORANJESTAD - Three new teams, called The Flintstones featuring Rudy, the Cliffhanger and The Prutsers were doing great during the first of the Plaza Quiz Night Series, a very popular series of Tuesday evenings filled with questions and answers at Café the Plaza in the Renaissance

Marketplace. One newcomer even got to the top three, stunning long-time top teams like Synergy (1), Bier Hier (2) and the Corner Girls (4). The Cliffhanger was in fifth place and De Prutsers come in eighth place.

Some questions asked: What is the name of Snoopy's bird friend in the comic series The Peanuts and: What is the Chicago Piano, a term used in the 1930's gangster world. The other one is: What is the name of the science that studies the earth's crust?

The answers: Woodstock, a machine gun and geology.

For those who wish to join



the fun of The Plaza Quiz Nights, just show up with a team before 8 pm on Tuesday evening, pay AWG. 5.00 per person and go for it.

Photos show the ambiente of the first of the 8 Quiz Nights, with terrific grandparents Sijtsema having the time of their lives. □



*** Human Hints Daily ***

Connection Thru Contribution

Humanity is undergoing a transformation from the third dimension based in Separation into the fourth dimension of Unity, where we are all pieces of the same Source. Our fundamental foundation of expression is changing.

Our fundamental frequencies have already begun the transformation. Although the Mayans were known to be quite brutal toward the end of their empire, their understanding of Time far surpasses our own. According to the Mayan calendar, on September 9, 2009, we entered the first of three 260-day cycles. The cycle that we have just entered harmonizes with the energies of community and cooperation.

Every person on Earth has a unique, specific purpose that contributes to their personal growth and contributes to Humanity. The fundamental question is, how can we contribute to Humanity in our own unique way? How can we help the whole? What personal attitude do we express every day, that helps others to free themselves from their own minds?

We need to feel like we're making a difference in our own unique way. A sense of contribution empowers our self-esteem because we have an inherent need to make a difference.

When we don't feel like we matter, we cut ourselves off from the energetic flow of Humanity. We disconnect from our sense of belonging, and become estranged from the energetic synchronicity available in the Community Connection thru Contribution. When we're not a part of the flow, we stagnate and decompose into food for new life.

When we feel like we make a difference, we connect energetically, physically, spiritually, mentally and emotionally to the dynamic flow of Life. We include ourselves in the infinite synchronicity that is always around us.

Discover what gives you a sense of contributing to Humanity, and you will discover your purpose in life. Universal Energies are aligning on Earth which will empower the cohesive community. We can use this opportunity to go with the flow, and transform our own lives in the process.

As long as we feel that we're contributing in our own unique way, we remain directly connected to the Graceful Flow of Universal Synchronicity. In this dynamic Universe, the slightest effort can cause a dramatic effect across the world and under our noses. Simple acts save lives.

Your energy creates wondrous probabilities that did not exist without your compassionate input. Think about what makes you feel like you're contributing to Humanity. What unique joyous expression is within you, that will serve the Human Mass Consciousness?

Therein lies nothing less than the Answer to your Life.

Until Tomorrow...

Quentin Danziger

Quentin has over 20 years experience balancing what we refer to as the Real World, with science and spirit. He has held positions of responsibility and authority, received a Bachelor of Science in Engineering Physics from Colorado School of Mines, and has also studied many avenues of alternative thought.

HumanHints is the culmination of his knowledge, experience and practice. These free daily emails detail concrete, real-world techniques to consciously create any future you choose, while in the throes of daily life created by outdated modes of thought.

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PALM BEACH – The health and calorie conscious among us need fear steakhouses no more. Whether it's a low-carb, low-fat, or even vegetarian diet you follow, Texas de Brazil Churrascaria fits into just about every dieter's menu plan.

Low carb eaters will have all their expectations surpassed with a tempting carnivorous selection of umpteen cuts of sizzling beef, pork, lamb, sausage, and poultry. The meats are prepared in the healthiest style of cooking—slow roasting—where much of the fat drips off in the roasting process, so those looking for a lower fat option to sautéing, pan frying, or deep frying will also be able to indulge.

The Brazilian-style steakhouse also offers up a garden full of healthy eats on a lavish 40-item seasonal salad bar, giving dieters plenty to choose from to accompany the

slow-roasted meats. A selection of fresh lettuces and vegetables may be standard for most salad bars, but Texas de Brazil's version goes a gourmet twist further, treating the palate to additional items like marinated portabella mushrooms, sweet roasted bell peppers, hearts of palm, sundried tomatoes, imported cheeses—including fresh buffalo mozzarella—sushi, homemade soups, and much more. The salad bar is included in the continuous service meal with unlimited choices from the grilled meats, but for vegetarians or the non-meat eaters, a special price is offered for just the salad bar. Of course, for those looking to splurge while on vacation, Texas de Brazil will gladly serve their garlic mashed potatoes, traditional fried plantains, and their world-famous parmesan cheese bread as part of the meal.

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PALM BEACH - Fresher than fresh, is the motto of the popular Bugaloe Beach Bar & Grill at De Palm Pier. Caught in the morning, served at night... That's the Bugaloe way!

Jumbled Chef Marc Hernandez is proudly presenting his rich platter with an 18oz Red Snapper or Grouper, a choice depending on the catch of that day. Bugaloe is known for fun and craziness, so it was just a logical step for me to go crazy with this colorful pallet



of exquisite fish, yellow rice and rich vegetables," Chef Marc says. With a smile he adds "And that just for US\$ 20!"

And right he is, as the platter has been a hit from the start. Served with a bottle of white wine this fish feast is truly a delight on your Monday night.

Bugaloe is located at De Palm Pier in Palm Beach between RIU Palace and Radisson Resort.

OPENING HOURS

Bugaloe Beach Bar and Grill is open daily from 8am till midnight. You may go there for a casual lunch or dinner and on Mondays the special is served from 5:30pm till 10:00pm. Reservations are not needed... just follow the good music, the fun and the smiles on the beach and you will know where Bugaloe is.



SALSA WORKSHOP

Always wanted to learn how to dance Salsa? Well, you will get your chance on Wednesday evening. Reggie and Sabine from ArubaSalsa will show you the moves of Latin

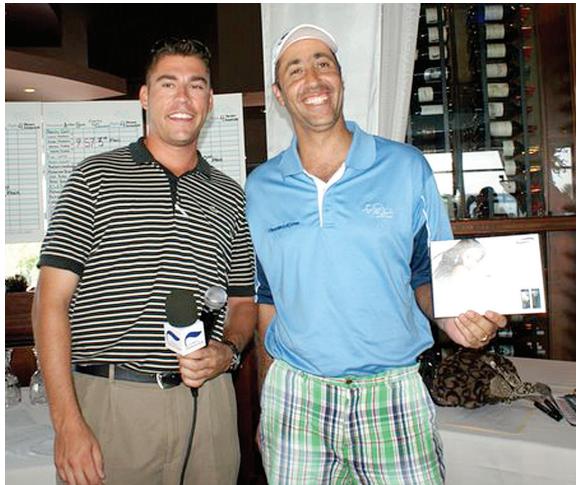
dancing. You will learn how to dance Salsa and Merengue in one hour. The FREE workshop starts at 7:30pm. The popular Salsa live band "PM" will take care of the swinging Latin tunes. Fun guaranteed!

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Friday 10pm - 12am: DJ Jeroen
Sunday 6-9pm: MARISELA & Aquerius

At the end of the fifth annual golf tournament

Divi Links & Aruba Bank make a donation to the Mary Joan Breast Cancer Support Group



EAGLE BEACH -- At the end of an excellent, most-enjoyable day of golfing, Divi Links in collaboration with Aruba Bank raised Awg 13,180.- for this year's designated charity, the Mary Joan Breast Cancer Support Group.

The money was presented to the volunteers of the foundation at a lively cocktail party hosted by Window on Aruba, at the Divi Club House.

The Divine Nine was played Sunday by 12 teams of four, in a 4-person scramble format. Head Golf Professional James Kiley who tallied the results in the early afternoon announced

Ray & Orlando Rasmijn, Hubert Solagnier and Anton Bernabela, the Ling & Sons team in the first place; the Compra team in second and the Family Golf team in third.

Family Golf Team, made up of two Father & Son pairs, also featured the youngest player, a child golf prodigy, who is nine and played extremely well, according to Kiley.

Managing Director Alex Nieuwmeyer helped present the donation, together with Shanoule Bikker, Marketing/P.R. Manager, Aruba Bank, and Divi's Island Marketing & Promotion Manager Tabitha



Fecunda.

Enrita Werleman, president of the Mary Joan Breast Cancer Support Group reported that about 50 cases of breast cancer are diagnosed each year on Aruba and that her foundation, named after Mary Joan who died at the age of 32, has been active for the past eleven years.

Werleman thanked Divi for also graciously hosting a golf clinic for her volunteers earlier in the week, and making fund raising for important community causes possible.

Aruba Bank, reports Bikker, has been organizing

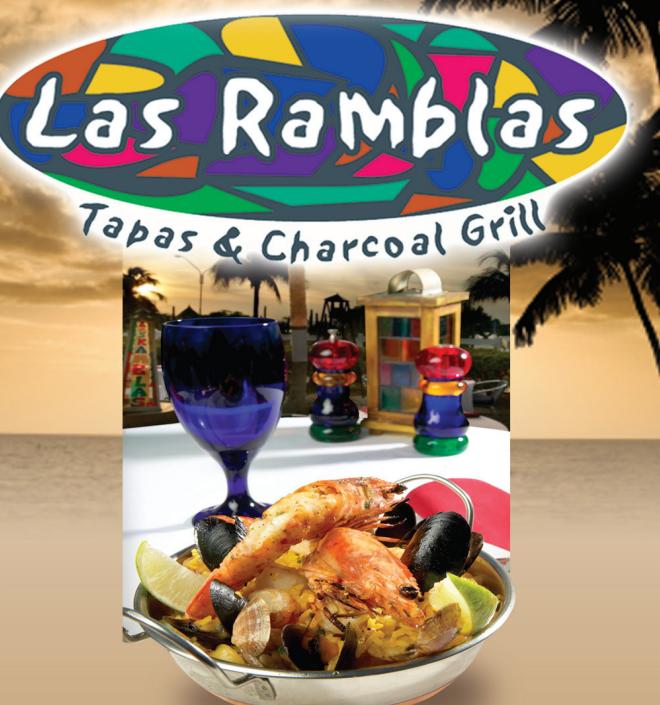
the Links Charity Golf Tournament for the past five years, this time also in conjunction with R.E. Irausquin which offered a car for the winner of a Hole-In-One.

Additional winners for the day included Cees Roks, closest to the pin and Ruben Goedhoop hitting the longest drive, both on the PricewaterhouseCoopers team.

Colombian Emeralds International provided a watch for the auction which raised additional funds.

Pictured here, images from the award ceremony and cheque presentation. □

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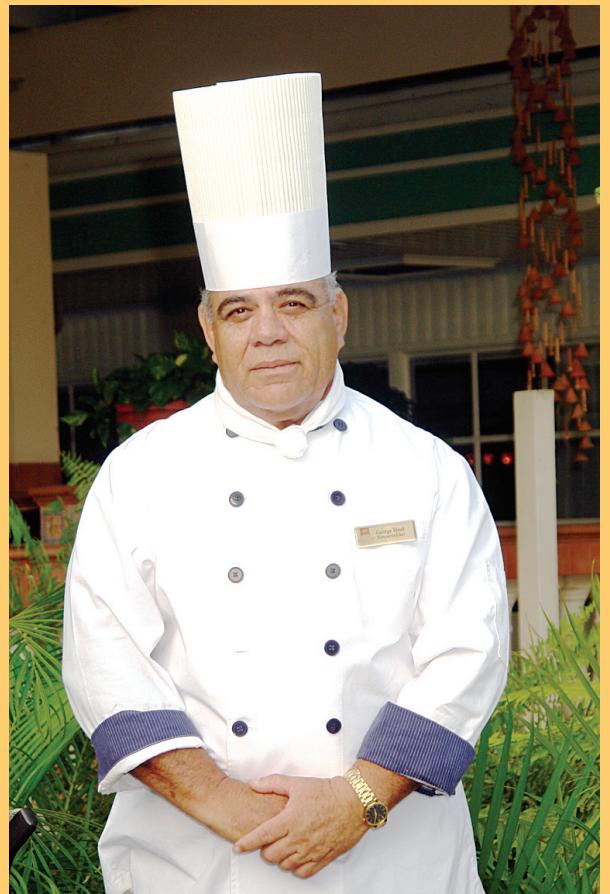
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The French Steakhouse delivers dining under the stars



Eagle Beach – The French Steakhouse at the Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa just added another charming dining option, a tropical outdoor courtyard, featuring delicious cuisine under the

stars.

The famed French Steakhouse prides itself on the elegant dining experience it offers patrons in the fully air-conditioned dining room. Yet recently the idea of adding a garden spot to the existing blueprint began to sprout in the creative mind of Executive Chef George Hoek, and he immediately recruited the landscapers to create the intimate, lovely setting. The French Steakhouse Ooh-La-La menu is now served indoor and alfresco, featuring creative appetizers, soups, salads, seafood dishes, poultry and the Pièce de Résistance South American & USDA Beef specialties.

Among popular appetizers the chef's Tropical Crab Cakes with pineapple & mango salsa and the Teriyaki Glazed Seared Duck Breast, served with garden greens and balsamic dressing, are real crowd pleasers.

True to the restaurant's French roots, the Onion Soup is a classic, while the Honey Glazed Salmon Salad winks at the exotic East with a sweet soy dressing. The menu features a great variety of seafood dishes from fresh fish to the totally sinful and amazingly decadent Caribbean Stuffed Shrimp with Crabmeat and Bacon, which became an instant hit. The tequila and sweet chili glaze, lends the Jumbo shrimp a pure taste of heaven!

The French Steakhouse is naturally famous for the South American Churrasco steak, a signature preparation, which now shares the stage with juicy



USDA beef specialties such as NY Sirloin and Filet Mignon.

Light-eaters will find the Jerk Chicken Skewers and the Lemon Herb Broilers very satisfying.

Open seven days a week from 5:30 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. the French Steakhouse is blessed with the nicest staff and a delightfully renovated dining room with sparkling China, crisp linen, an interesting bread basket, colossal desserts and live jazz on piano with Eddy Samson who is Aruba's best entertainer, and a walking & breathing music encyclopedia, just whistle the tune, and Eddy will produce a symphonic version of your favorite song.

Hungry patrons will appreciate the Ambassador's 5-course menu featuring the run of the menu highlights for just \$34.95 per person. www.manchebo.com/steakhouse □

Pega Pega Café & Beach Bar reinvents Beach Cuisine



Eagle Beach – Pega Pega Café & Beach Bar at the Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa is widely recognized as the home of Beach Cuisine.

Executive Chef George Hoek and his culinary team serve a Sun Splashed menu on the ocean front terrace, raising the restaurant to a must-visit, must-try status.

The contemporary menu, lists many favorite dishes from around the world, borrowing inspiration from US, Mexican, Thai, Jamaican, Cuban, Greek and Mediterranean kitchens, all served with a tropical, Caribbean flair.

From Sun-Sational Salads, to Cuban pressed jawbreakers and wraps, mid-day platters also include oversize Beef Burgers, Philly Cheese Steak Sandwiches and Hot Dogs.

The Pega Pega tropical &

frozen cocktail list, with fresh fruit or ice cream smoothies, daiquiris, coladas and

margaritas, leaves nothing out, including Yellow Birds, Sex on the Beach and Mudslides,



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atmosphere, from 12 noon to

5 p.m. The bar is open from

11 a.m. to 11 p.m. □

Giorgio's Ristorante Italiano introduces Menu Turistico



Eagle Beach -- Giorgio's Ristorante Italiano located at the heart of the low-rise hotels at the Manchebo Beach Resort &

Spa, delivers authentic Mediterranean flavors, at a reasonable price.

The restaurant has just introduced Menu Turistico a three-course dinner featuring appetizers, main courses and desserts for just \$19.95, per person, plus 15% service charge.

Patrons may choose between home made soup and Caesar salad, Fettuccini Alfredo, Lasagna Casareccia, Spaghetti alla Bolognese or any favorite pizza with Tiramisu, Cheese Cake or Ice Cream for the sweet finale.

Executive Chef George Hoek is the resort's much-appreciated culinary expert. He was the recent recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award, presented by the Aruba Hotel & Tourism Association in collaboration with the Digicel Group. Chef George accepted the Shoco Award, the national award of excellence, and Aruba's top professional decoration, in the tourism industry. □

Public Health Committee to visit St. Maarten Nov 12

PHILIPSBURG -- The Committee of Public Health of the Parliament of the Netherlands Antilles will visit St. Maarten on November 12 for follow-up meetings with regard to the recently published obesity report of Parliament.

President of Parliament Pedro Atacho urged all public health stakeholders on St. Maarten to make a serious effort to meet with the committee to tackle "the silent epidemic" in the Netherlands Antilles. The Committee, headed by member of Parliament Jacqueline Spencer, will travel to Statia November 9 and to Saba on November 10.

"Obesity is a serious problem in the Netherlands Antilles if we were only to look at recent findings," Atacho explained. "For St. Maarten alone, a recent study showed 40.4 per cent of women are obese and

30.7 per cent of men. The rest of the islands are just as worrisome and that's not even addressing the issue of being overweight which is much worse," he added.

Atacho said the responsibility lies with everyone and healthy living starts with first recognizing that there is a problem.

He asked the general public and stakeholders to give the committee the necessary support and media coverage it needs so that collectively awareness could be heightened.

Atacho also announced that proposals for a raise in taxes on foods that are high in fat and for a reduction of taxes on healthier foods, will be discussed in the upcoming Central Committee meeting of Parliament.

He did not provide any additional details on the

proposal only saying that it has to be discussed. Clarity would

have to be provided on, among other things, how exactly this

would work on St. Maarten, a duty-free destination. □

Ujima launches literacy series

MIDDLE REGION--The Ujima Foundation launched its six-week Literacy and Cultural Arts Afternoon Programme for youngsters ages seven to twelve on Tuesday with 31 pupils of seven local elementary schools.

The foundation has a great interest in improving the literacy of youngsters on the island and after observing that many students struggle with reading decided to conduct this programme for all primary schools.

The participating schools are Sister Magda, Sister Borgia, Sister Marie Laurence, both campuses of the Methodist Agogic Centre, St. Dominic Primary and Sister Regina. The programme will be hosted at Sister Marie Laurence Primary School in Middle Region from 1:30 to 5:00pm daily until December 4. First Lady Angela Richards-Huggins was invited by Ujima Foundation to kick off the programme officially on Tuesday. Ujima Foundation director Judith Bell noted during the opening that the foundation had also launched

the programme to offer an after-school activity for all children.

The programme will incorporate an artistic edge while improving the pupils' reading skills. The foundation wants to make reading fun, so music, dance and art all specific to St. Maarten culture will be used.

The youngsters will learn about cultural aspects of the island such as the "ponum" dance and making bush tea, and will engage in excursions to Fort Amsterdam, Philipsburg Jubilee Library, The Mighty Dow's studio and Emilio Wilson Park.

Programme facilitators will consist of two class teachers and specialist teachers, Bevil Byam of Blue Orange who will teach art and handicrafts, Bobby Vlaun who will give music lessons and Clara Reyes who will direct dance classes. Special guest speakers will include poet/artist Ruby Bute, artist Max Phelipa, poet Roberto Arrindell, writer Lisa Burnett and storyteller Vivian Roberts. □



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Australian oil spill 'putting animals at risk'

by Amy Coopes

SYDNEY (AFP) - A massive oil leak off Australia's northwest coast poses an "immediate risk" to dozens of marine species, with untold numbers possibly dying and sinking to the Timor Sea floor, a report has said.

Biologist James Watson was commissioned to carry out a government survey of the West Atlas drilling rig, where at least 400 barrels of oil have gushed daily into the ocean since August 21.

He found about 20 dead seabirds and a dead sea snake among 23 species, and said the oil appeared to be drawing certain species into the toxic area, where they were at grave risk.

"The presence of dying birds and dead sea snakes suggest that there is an immediate risk to species utilising the water that has been affected by the oil slick," Watson wrote in his report, which was released late Friday.

"It is possible that species that are dying or dead and lying in oil-affected water may not stay afloat for long periods of time, making it unlikely that we would find large numbers of dead animals," he added.

There was a "significant risk" that a change in conditions could push the oil into deeper waters further west and north, where large numbers of endangered cetaceans lived, he added.

"Moreover, as the breeding

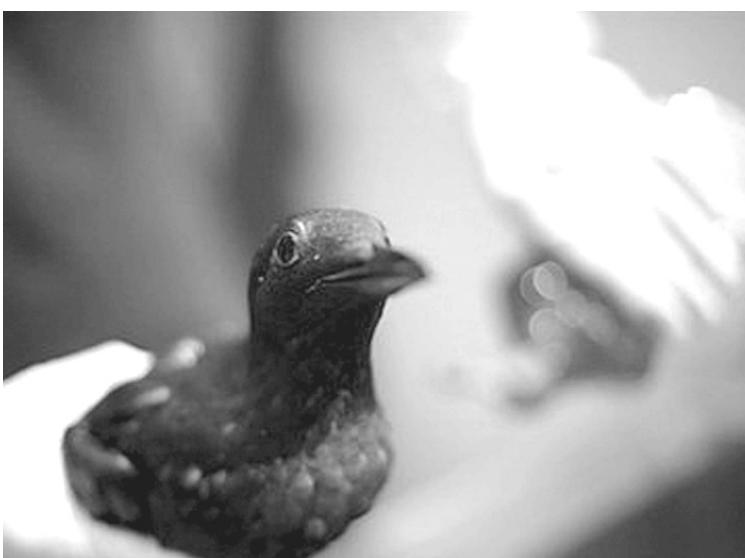
seasons ends... more juvenile birds will be feeding throughout the region. As such, we believe that over the upcoming months the oil slick -- if uncontained -- may have an increasing impact on these species," he said.

Watson said the spill appeared to have changed the feeding and breeding behaviour of some animals, and long-term studies were needed to determine how severe the impact was.

"I am amazed at how little Australia cares about this," he told the Sydney Morning Herald newspaper.

"This is a huge oil slick." The rig's Thai-based operator PTTEP Australasia failed in a fourth attempt to plug the leak, now entering its 10th week, and said it could be months before the operation was successful.

More than 2,000 barrels of



File photo shows an animal protection officer preparing to remove oil from a contaminated sea bird. A massive oil leak off Australia's northwest coast poses an "immediate risk" to dozens of marine species, with untold numbers possibly dying and sinking to the Timor Sea floor, a report has said.

(AFP/File/Leon Neal)

oil have been recovered from the ocean surface in clean up efforts to date.

Environment Minister Peter Garrett said he remained very concerned about the long-term

impact and was "certainly very anxious to see this spill stopped quickly and safely."

"While acknowledging the difficulty of the task at hand, I share the frustrations that efforts to get this spill stopped have so far not been successful," he said.

"However, I am determined that the environmental impacts of this spill are properly assessed and the long term monitoring plan I have commissioned will help ensure that happens."

The World Wide Fund for Nature warned that wildlife was dying and "hundreds if not thousands of dolphins, seabirds and sea-snakes are being exposed to toxic oil" after surveying the spill area, 250 kilometres (155 miles) offshore.

PTTEP Australasia has agreed to pay for environmental monitoring of the area for at least two years. □



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BUSINESS

Aruba TODAY



In this photo taken Sept. 2, 2009, visitors admire the John Deere exhibits at the Farm Progress Show in Decatur, Ill. Businesses are finally willing to spend more money on equipment, a healthy sign for the economic recovery.

(AP Photo/Seth Perlman)

In boost for economy, companies spend on equipment

By JEANNINE AVERSA,
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON — Businesses are finally willing to spend more money on equipment, a healthy sign for the economic recovery. For the first time in nearly two years, companies ponied up more money for a category called "equipment and software" in the third quarter of the year.

It isn't a huge growth rate — just 1.1 percent, according to the government's report last week on U.S. economic growth. Still, equipment and software are a broad and important category of items made by such companies as Deere & Co., EMC Corp. and General Electric Co. It includes computers, software, medical equipment, industrial engines, autos, planes, furniture and farm machinery. Business spending is especially crucial now because consumers, who normally drive a recovery, aren't doing so this time. Many shoppers are too squeezed by job losses, flat wages, tight credit and high debt.

The higher spending doesn't necessarily mean companies are swimming in cash. But in a twist on the Ant and the Grasshopper fable, some businesses managed to save enough during the recession to spend more now, analysts said. Others can't get loans to expand their plants and instead must upgrade the equipment they have, analysts said.

When businesses spend more on equipment, jobs can eventually be created at companies that make the machines and the parts that go into them.

Some makers of technology-related equipment see better business conditions. At EMC, which sells data storage machines and software, CEO Joe Tucci said he was starting to see customers become more comfortable with ramping up spending on information technology.

EMC said it expected a "slow but steady recovery."

For now, though, most businesses are reluctant to hire. To meet any pickup in demand, they're relying instead on workers they already have.

The economy isn't likely to create many jobs until a broad-based recovery has taken hold.

Edward Yardeni, president and chief investment strategist at Yardeni Research, predicts businesses will boost their spending on capital equipment at around a 10 percent annualized rate in the current October-to-December quarter. And he thinks it will continue rising after that as businesses' revenue and profits improve. □

After stock market slide data take on new urgency

By TIM PARADIS,

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK — After a forceful reminder that the third quarter is history, stock investors are now uneasy about the final months of the year.

Stocks posted their biggest losses in four months Friday as traders worried that consumers won't be able to help lift the economy. Only a day earlier, investors celebrated news that the economy grew at the fastest pace in two years in the July-September period.

The Dow Jones industrial average rose 200 points Thursday only to tumble 250 on Friday.

The market's volatility adds urgency to a flood of data this week that could help signal whether investors have been prescient or premature in the bets they've been placing on a rebound in the economy. The benchmark Standard & Poor's 500 index lost 2 percent for October to break a seven-month streak of gains but is still up 53.2 percent from a 12-year low in March.

Much of this week's data on employment, manufacturing, services and home sales will provide investors with more up-to-date snapshots of the economy than last week's numbers on the third quarter. The Federal Reserve also will weigh in after it wraps up a two-day meeting on interest rate policy.

The week may be pivotal because investors will be searching for clues about how the country will stand without as much government hand-holding as in the third quarter, when the economy grew at an annual pace of 3.5 percent. Some programs like Cash for Clunkers that drummed up car sales and puffed up the overall economy have ended.

Traders also will be sifting through comments from



FILE - In this Oct. 30, 2009 file photo, specialist Donald Vaneck works at his post on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. After a forceful reminder that the third quarter is history, stock investors are now uneasy about the final months of the year.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew, file)

the Fed for signals on when policymakers might start to raise interest rates, which are at essentially zero, a record low.

Investors will be looking under the hood of economic reports for any insight about what might happen in the final two months of the fourth quarter and in 2010. The Institute for Supply Management's October index on manufacturing is expected Monday. Analysts will be paying particular attention to its new orders index, which is an indicator of future activity.

The ISM's index on service industries is due Wednesday. The biggest report of the week is expected to be the Labor Department's October employment report.

Unemployment stands at a 26-year high of 9.8 percent. Analysts predict unemployment will have risen for October and that it will top 10 percent by next year.

Even though unemployment doesn't tend to fall until well after economic recoveries have begun, some investors are worried that layoffs and the threat of layoffs will prove so severe that they will

undermine the economy's ability to recover by keeping consumers away from stores.

Increased spending by households is considered key to a sustained recovery. So far, the economy's turn has come from government spending and businesses boosting profits by slashing costs.

Jill Evans, portfolio manager of the Alpine Dynamic Dividend Fund in Purchase, N.Y., said that even as consumers hold back, some businesses like manufacturers are doing better as overseas economies recover faster.

The weak dollar makes U.S. exports cheap for foreign buyers.

"I think we're having a bit of a tug-of-war here," she said, referring to improvements among some businesses and lagging consumers.

Evans noted that consumers have been the ones to pull the economy out of recessions since the 1990s but that more often, increased spending by businesses and government is what plucks the economy from downturns.

"The consumer is expected, in our opinion, to be the last thing to turn here," she said. □

HEALTH

Aruba **TODAY**

Med, nursing schools teaching alternative remedies



This May 6, 2009 photo shows medical student Jimmy Wu at a clinic in Oak Creek, Wis. Wu spent a summer in Beijing with a university faculty member observing traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture and hopes to include these in a family medicine practice someday. The government has spent more than \$22 million to help medical and nursing schools start teaching about alternative medicine but some critics say the lesson plans are biased toward unproven remedies.

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE,
AP Medical Writer

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Ten years and \$2.5 billion in research have found no cures from alternative medicine. Yet these mostly unproven treatments are now mainstream and used by more than a third of all Americans. This is one in an occasional Associated Press series on their use and potential risks.*

Future doctors and nurses are learning about acupuncture and herbs along with anatomy and physiology at a growing number of medical schools. It's another example of how alternative medicine has become mainstream. And it's often done with Uncle Sam's help.

The government has spent more than \$22 million to help medical and nursing schools start teaching about alternative medicine — lesson plans that some critics say are biased toward unproven remedies.

Additional tax money has been spent to recruit and train

(AP Photo/Morry Gash)
young doctors to do research in this field, launching some into careers as alternative medicine providers.

Doctors need to know about popular remedies so they can discuss them nonjudgmentally and give competent advice, the government says, and many universities and medical groups agree.

"Patients are using these things" whether doctors think they should or should not, and safety is a big concern, said Dr. Victor Sierpina, an acupuncturist at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston who heads a group of academics who favor such training.

But to critics, it's like teaching Harry Potter medicine. Students are being asked to close their eyes to science principles that guide the rest of their training in order to keep an open mind about pseudoscience, they say.

"I'm concerned about the teaching of illogical thinking to medical students" and lending credence to biologically implausible theories like

distance healing and energy fields, said Dr. Stephen Barrett, a retired physician who runs Quackwatch, a Web site on medical scams.

Teaching about alternative medicine implies acceptance of it and "potentially creates more gullibility and less critical, objective thinking," said Dr. Wallace Sampson, editor of the journal *Scientific Review of Alternative Medicine*. "This will be felt in many indirect ways," he said, including judgment errors, misguiding people with severe diseases, and lax standards and laws.

The real issue is not whether alternative medicine should be taught, but how, said Dr. Joseph Jacobs, former head of the federal Office of Alternative Medicine.

"The parallel here is creationism versus science," Jacobs said. "If the topic is taught objectively, to help students communicate with patients, it's a good idea. If it's being taught as part of an advocacy, for acceptance among physicians, I think that's a little bit bogus."

Sometimes the line is blurry. Some schools have close ties to alternative medicine providers or advocates who shape information on the schools' Web sites or classes for students and the public. Two examples:

The University of Arizona's Center for Integrative Medicine has medical residency programs in hospitals around the country, partly sponsored by well-known advocate Dr. Andrew Weil, the center's founder. A private group that promotes such care, the Bravewell Collaborative, gives scholarships for dozens of the Arizona school's students to get hands-on training in integrative care clinics. □

Anemia Drug May Raise Stroke Risk in Kidney Patients

By Steven Reinberg
HealthDay Reporter

A drug designed to fight anemia appears to double the risk of stroke in patients with diabetes and kidney disease without substantially improving their quality of life, a new study finds. Darbepoetin alfa, marketed as Aranesp and known as an erythropoiesis-stimulating agent (ESA), is often prescribed for diabetic patients with chronic kidney disease and mild anemia. "The benefits we assumed we would have by treating anemia were less striking and the risks were more striking," said lead researcher Dr. Marc A. Pfeffer, a professor of medicine in the cardiovascular division of Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston.

"This provides new data for doctors and patients to make their own risk-benefit assessment," he said. "There was a perception that treating anemia would make people feel so much better that we'll take risks, but the benefit in quality of life was not as great as we thought, and there was a clear doubling of your risk for a stroke."

The report was published in the Oct. 30 online edition of the *New England Journal of Medicine* to coincide with its scheduled presentation at the annual meeting of the American Society of Nephrology in San Diego.

For the study, Pfeffer's team randomly assigned more than 4,000 patients with diabetes, chronic kidney disease and anemia to receive Aranesp or placebo. During the study, 632 patients receiving Aranesp died or suffered a cardiovascular event, compared to 602 of the patients receiving placebo.

As well, 101 patients taking Aranesp had a fatal or non-fatal stroke compared with 53 of the placebo patients, the researchers found. In addition, patients taking Aranesp reported only a modest improvement in their fatigue, the researchers noted. In earlier studies, Aranesp and a similar drug, epoetin alfa, marketed as Procrit or EpoGen, were linked to increased risk of death in cancer and stroke patients.

Pfeffer believes that people with more severe kidney disease, such as those on dialysis, might still find Aranesp beneficial and the risk acceptable.

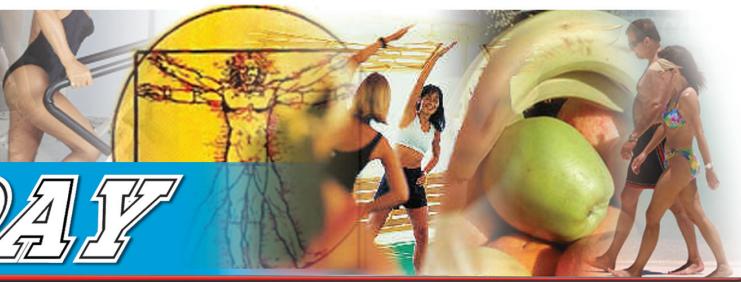
"People on dialysis generally feel even worse and generally have even more severe anemia, and this class of therapy has been very helpful to them," he said.

Because the drug was beneficial to these patients, doctors assumed it would help less severely anemic patients, Pfeffer said. "But this use of ESAs exceeded the data," he said. "Now we have the data, and we will revisit how the drug is used now." Dr. Phillip Marsden, a professor of medicine at the University of Toronto and author of an accompanying journal editorial, said these findings mean that doctors and patients will have to discuss whether or not to start the medication.

"For most of these patients, the modest improvement in quality of life will not be enough to subject themselves to the increased risk of stroke and death," he said.

ESAs have been used for two decades, Marsden noted. "It is a bit shocking that it took us 20 years to address whether or not these drugs were safe -- and now we know more."

Dr. Ajay Singh, clinical chief of the renal division and director of dialysis at Brigham and Women's Hospital, said this "landmark study" raises the fundamental question of whether epoetin or darbepoetin should routinely be used in treating anemia of chronic kidney disease. □



Mobile revolution finally reaches Pacific

by David Brooks

WELLINGTON (AFP) — The Pacific islands are the last frontier for mobile telecommunications but the arrival of Irish-owned Digicel Pacific in the past three years has brought about a revolution.

Residents of the islands and visitors all have horror stories about the poor service and sky-high charges of telecoms monopolies in the Pacific. But the arrival of competition through Digicel means Pacific islanders are beginning to experience some of the benefits taken for granted elsewhere in the world.

Digicel opened its first Pacific operations in Samoa on November 1, 2006 -- exactly three years ago.

Now it has expanded to Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Vanuatu, Fiji and Nauru, a total market of 7.5 million people, and the company has invested more than 500 million US dollars and now employs 1,100 people.

Digicel shows no sign of

slowing down, planning to expand to the Solomon Islands, East Timor and Tahiti over the next year, Digicel Pacific chief executive Vanessa Slowey said.

"It's most certainly improved the lives of millions of people in the region," Slowey said of the new competition.

Most of the island nations Digicel entered were previously served by a state-owned mobile monopoly, except for Nauru which had no commercial mobile service at all.

Rod Duncan, an economics lecturer with an interest in Pacific development, of Charles Sturt University in New South Wales, Australia, said telecommunications in the Pacific were "appalling", with some of the highest charges anywhere in the world. "No wonder it's so easy for Digicel to come in against these great vast, inefficient, lumbering beasts that existed by gouging their customers."

Owned by Irish telecommunications

entrepreneur Denis O'Brien, Digicel in 2001 entered the Caribbean, where the company now operates in 26 markets.

The company's experience in establishing itself in the Caribbean's many small island markets made expanding into the Pacific a logical move.

"If you look at the Pacific region it's a mirror image of where the Caribbean was about eight years ago, with a high demand for communications services, widespread customer dissatisfaction, generally high tariffs and low mobile penetration," Slowey told AFP.

The company has vastly increased the number of mobile users in the Pacific by offering subsidised phones and much cheaper rates.

"If I put the mobile device in people's hands, if I make it affordable enough to use that device, then I have got a customer," Slowey said.

In Samoa, national call charges have fallen by 50 percent, international call charges dropped 60 percent and the



File photo shows Haitians at a Digicel outlet in Port-au-Prince. Pacific island nations are the last frontier for mobile telecommunications but the arrival of Irish-owned Digicel Pacific in the past three years has brought about a revolution in telecommunications there.

(AFP/File/Thony Belizaire)

area of mobile coverage has been greatly expanded, Slowey said.

The number of mobile users in Samoa has jumped from 13,000 to 95,000, about half the population.

In Papua New Guinea, a mountainous nation of six million people, the cost of calls has fallen up to 60 percent while mobile penetration has quadrupled since Digicel started operations in mid-2007, the company says.

The tiny nation of Nauru, with a population of around 10,000, had no commercial mobile service before Digicel entered the market in August this year.

"Nauru is a fantastic success story. Within a week, 50 percent of the population bought a phone and were on the network," Slowey said.

Duncan agreed Digicel's entry into the Pacific market has been a rare economic success story in the region.

"I think it's the brightest story in the Pacific in the last decade at least," he said.

Better communications spur small business and improve people's lives, he said, citing a story about fishermen in Papua New Guinea bringing their catch in and being able to phone relatives on different wharves to find out where the best prices are.

Slowey declines to discuss the private company's profitability but says Digicel is focused on the long term.

"If you are going to go in there and take all your profits out of the company and not reinvest, you are on the road to failure." □

PCs shed pounds and CD drives, gain touch screens

By JESSICA MINTZ,
AP Technology Writer

SEATTLE - Personal computers are changing — and not just because of the recent launch of Windows 7. Visit an electronics store and you might also find laptops are missing a familiar component. You could experiment with new ways of controlling some computers. And you'll see portable PCs slimming down.

Even with all the attention lavished on Apple's iPhone and Amazon.com Inc.'s Kindle this year, your PC likely is still the center of your digital universe. Here's a look at what the season's computer trends mean for you.

• We're over drives.

Computers have come with "optical drives," slots for CDs or DVDs, for years. They've been useful for installing new software, watching movies or transferring music libraries into digital form. But one of the biggest lessons from the craze for "netbooks" — inexpensive little laptops designed mainly for browsing the Web — is that people were so excited about the small, easy-to-carry size that they didn't miss having a CD or DVD drive.

Apple Inc. got rid of an optical drive two years ago when it introduced the first sliver-thin MacBook Air.

That wasn't seen as a trendsetting step at the time because the computer, which cost \$1,800 then, wasn't meant for mainstream consumption. But netbooks, which start at \$250 on BestBuy.com, surely are made for everyone.



The wee laptops' popularity is proof that people are finding it easy enough to download software, movies and music to portable computers, especially with the widespread availability of Wi-Fi and cellular Internet service. And plenty of services let you store files over the Internet, eliminating the need to burn backups to discs. Taking out the optical drive doesn't significantly lower prices.

Doing so does let PC makers design much thinner laptops. Companies including Dell Inc. and Hewlett-Packard Co. have pulled DVD drives out of mid-range to more expensive computers, such as HP's Pavilion dm3z, which starts at \$550, all the way up to the \$1,700-and-up HP Envy and Dell's \$1,500-and-up Adamo. You just might want to think twice if you're hooked on transferring CDs into MP3s — or if you spend a lot of time watching DVDs on airplanes and don't want to squint at your iPod screen or get a separate portable video player.

• Good enough is plenty. □

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HBO filmmakers get inside Obama campaign



In this publicity image released by HBO, a scene is shown from the documentary film, 'By the People: The Election of Barack Obama,' premiering Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2009 on HBO.

By DAVID BAUDER,
AP Television Writer

NEW YORK — Pivotal presidential campaigns are frequently defined in retrospect by documentaries.

"The War Room" chronicled Bill Clinton's political operation in 1992, adding a phrase to the political lexicon in the process. Alexandra Pelosi's "Journeys With George" captured the oddities of a national campaign on board George W. Bush's airplane in 2000.

The makers of "By the People: The Election of Barack Obama," which premieres Tuesday — Election Night — on HBO, wouldn't mind the same status.

"That was our hope — that we would create something for history," said filmmaker Alicia Sams, who made the documentary with colleague Amy Rice and a key assist from actor Edward Norton. Rice was inspired by Obama's speech to the Democratic National Convention in 2004 and wanted to do a film about him as an up-and-coming political leader. Her friend Sams signed on, but they couldn't get their phone calls to Obama's office returned until Norton called on their behalf. He's still involved as a producer.

They got lucky. They wound up with a far more important story than they had dreamed about.

Even though they began filming nearly a year before Obama announced his candidacy in

February 2007, being on the ground early didn't guarantee them anything. They were nearly shut down when the campaign began.

Obama aides like David Axelrod didn't want Rice and Sams around. He worried about leaks and whether the presence of cameras would cause people to act like they were in a reality show — concerns that proved amusing in retrospect. Access was a constant concern.

Iowa became their centerpiece. They stuck close to Obama through his early campaigning there, catching moments like a 9-year-old boy making phone calls to drum up support. After three hours of shaking hands, a weary Obama says, "It's like I've been through a wrestling match."

Through the crowds and contact, the filmmakers sense Obama catching on as he moved toward an impressive victory in the Iowa caucuses. The film introduces audiences to the people around Obama, not just top aides like Axelrod and David Plouffe, but the enthusiastic Ronnie Cho, Obama's Polk County organizer. Their discipline and meticulous planning were evident. It was the birthplace of a movement, and whether Obama eventually won or lost the presidency, Rice and Sams felt Iowa gave them a film.

"It was part of the story nobody knew," Rice said. "When he won Iowa, people started to pay attention."

Norton said the campaign's

emotional restraint impressed him.

Obama is shown riding in an elevator after having just clinched the Democratic nomination and a film crew member remarks, "You must be feeling pretty good." The basketball-loving candidate just says, "You don't cut down the nets for the conference championship."

"He just seemed so unflappable and what you wondered was, 'I wonder if behind the doors it's like the war room, you know, everybody's cussing at each other and they're furious,'" Norton said. "When you got around behind the private spaces with them, it was the same."

Obama saw a rough cut of the film and sent back word that he cried upon seeing the emotional reactions of his staff members to his election. Cried? Rice doesn't quite believe that.

That's what makes extraordinary her footage of an Obama speech the night before the election, after he learned that the grandmother who helped raise him had died a day before seeing the ultimate dream come true. Rice was well-positioned to catch a tear trickling down Obama's face that night, a view that news cameras panned farther back missed.

On Election Night, Rice shadowed Axelrod and David Plouffe, the aides that once didn't want her around until she wore them down. She catches the emotional scenes

of a headquarters where an implausible dream had come true. She followed the men to an elevator and into Obama's hotel suite as the campaign architects congratulated the new president-elect.

"Don't start crying," Michelle Obama says while hugging Axelrod. While the film's release triggers memories of a historic night, it may not be well-timed for Obama.

It reaches TV screens less than a month after Obama's selection for the Nobel Peace Prize, a prize that left many Americans and even the president puzzled about what

he had achieved to earn it. Difficult decisions with the war in Afghanistan and health care loom.

The documentary has a laudatory tone; after following Obama for two years both Rice and Sams said they voted for him. The film could leave Obama fans pining about potential yet unfulfilled and give opponents another example of the media fawning over the president.

"The reaction is going to change on any given day," Sams said, "and that's OK. What we want is the movie to stand the test of time." □

'This Is It' tops charts with \$101M worldwide



In this film publicity image released by Sony Pictures, the movie poster for Michael Jackson's 'This Is It' film is shown.

(AP Photo/Sony Pictures)

By DAVID GERMAIN,
AP Movie Writer

LOS ANGELES — "Michael Jackson's This Is It" pulled in \$101 million worldwide in its first five days, and distributor Sony is extending the farewell performance film beyond its planned two-week run.

The film was the No. 1 Halloween thriller domestically with a \$21.3 million opening weekend, according to studio estimates Sunday.

The previous weekend's No. 1 movie, Paramount's low-budget horror sensation "Paranormal Activity," slipped to No. 2 with \$16.5 million, lifting its total to \$84.8 million.

"This Is It" raised its domestic total to \$32.5 million. The

movie pulled in \$68.5 million overseas, including \$10.4 million in Japan, \$6.3 million in Germany, \$5.8 million in France and \$3.2 million in China.

"He's just loved everywhere on the planet," said Rory Bruer, head of distribution for Sony. "It doesn't matter if it's Asia, Africa, Australia, Europe, South America. Every continent in the world loved him and his music."

In Great Britain, where Jackson had planned a marathon series of 50 London concerts starting last July, the movie earned \$7.6 million.

"This Is It" captures Jackson in behind-the-scenes performances in the weeks before his death last June, as he rehearsed his biggest hits for the London shows.

"This Is It" originally was scheduled for a theatrical run of only two weeks. The studio has extended it a few more weeks domestically, leaving it in theaters through Thanksgiving weekend, one of the year's busiest moviegoing times.

Sony plans to extend the run of "This Is It" overseas on a country-by-country basis, with most territories probably getting one to three weeks of extra playing time, Bruer said. The studio paid \$60 million for film rights to Jackson's rehearsal footage, an investment the movie recouped in days. □



White House Senior Adviser David Axelrod, walks down the Colonnade of the White House in Washington, Tuesday, Oct. 20, 2009.

Associated Press

White House: Afghan troop decision within weeks

LARA JAKES,
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Top Obama administration officials pledged Sunday to work with Afghan President Hamid Karzai, despite continuing doubts about his credibility that could have been eased had he won a runoff election against his top challenger, who dropped out citing concerns of fraud.

The decision Sunday by former Afghan Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah to quit the runoff, less than a week before it was set to happen, creates yet another headache for the White House as it struggles to draw up a new battle plan for the eight-year Afghanistan war — including whether to send tens of thousands more U.S. troops to fight.

"We are going to deal with the government that is there," senior Obama adviser David Axelrod said. "And obviously there are issues we need to discuss, such as reducing the high level of corruption. These are issues we'll take up with President Karzai."

Axelrod said Obama would announce a war strategy "within weeks." A senior U.S. official told The Associated Press that Obama has still not yet decided what to do, and it remains unclear whether he will decide before he goes to Asia on Nov. 11.

The official said a Karzai victory would have given the sitting Afghan president more

legitimacy in the wake of widespread charges of fraud during the initial election in August, in which he collected 48 percent of the vote. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to speak more frankly about Obama's decision-making process.

Still, Karzai's re-election was all but universally expected among U.S. officials who have been planning for weeks on how to help his government move forward.

"Karzai was going to win anyway. So what now?" Rep. Duncan Hunter said Sunday in an AP interview from Dubai as he headed back to the United States after three days in Afghanistan.

Had a runoff occurred, "that would make me think that he's more credible," said Hunter, a Marine veteran who served in Iraq and Afghanistan. "But we can't force Abdullah to run. Let's get past that and say, 'Karzai, step up.'"

It was still not clear Sunday whether a runoff election would be held anyway, but an announcement canceling it was expected as early as Monday. In a statement, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton praised Abdullah and said, "It is now a matter for the Afghan authorities to decide on a way ahead that brings this electoral process to a conclusion in line with the Afghan constitution."

Continued on Next Page

Search for Calif. crash survivors now recovery



Barnes



Bryant



Seidman

This undated image provided by the U.S. Coast Guard shows from left: Lt. Cmdr. Che J Barnes, 35, from Capay, Calif., aircraft commander; Lt. Adam W. Bryant, 28, from Crewe, Va., co-pilot; and Chief Petty Officer John F. Seidman, 43, from Stockton, Ca., flight engineer. The C-130 and the Marine Corps AH-1W Super Cobra helicopter collided at 7:10 p.m. Thursday Oct. 29, 2009 as the Coast Guard was conducting a search operation for a missing boater.

Associated Press

CHRISTOPHER WEBER,
Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES — The search for nine people missing when a U.S. Coast Guard plane collided with a Marine Corps helicopter over the Pacific Ocean is now a recovery mission, officials said Sunday.

Continued on Page B3



Afghanistan's presidential challenger Abdullah Abdullah gestures after announcing his decision not to participate in Afghanistan's run-off election during a press conference in Kabul, Afghanistan, Sunday, Nov. 1, 2009. Abdullah announced Sunday he would not participate in next weekend's runoff election because his demands for new measures prevent fraud were rejected. He stopped short of calling on his supporters to boycott the balloting.

Associated Press

Afghanistan's President Karzai effectively handed second term

HEIDI VOGT
ROBERT H. REID
Associated Press Writers

KABUL (AP) — President Hamid Karzai was effectively handed a second five-year term Sunday when his only challenger dropped out of the race, and the Obama administration said it was prepared to work with the man it has previously criticized to combat corruption and confront the Taliban insurgency.

Continued on Page B6



In this photograph provided by "Meet the Press," White House adviser Valerie Jarrett appears on "Meet the Press" Sunday, Oct. 18, 2009, at the NBC studios in Washington.

Associated Press

WHITE HOUSE

Continued from Page B1

For months, the Obama administration has been grappling with whether to continue targeting the Taliban with more U.S. forces in an increasingly deadly war in Afghanistan, or to focus on eliminating al-Qaida and other terrorists with unmanned spy planes in Pakistan. About 68,000 American troops already have been ordered to report to Afghanistan by the end of the year. The top U.S. and NATO commander in Afghanistan, Army Gen. Stanley McChrystal, wants the Pentagon to send him an additional 40,000 troops to prevent the Taliban from letting al-Qaida once again use Afghanistan as a haven — as it was in the days leading up to the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks.

The White House has signaled it will probably send more

forces, but fewer than what McChrystal wants. The senior U.S. official said Sunday that Obama's national security team is trying to define a "sufficiency standard" — sending a sufficient number of U.S. troops to provide a sufficient level of security and allow sufficient growth of governance and economic development to stabilize Afghanistan over the next three to five years. Abdullah's withdrawal, in effect, handed Karzai an uncontested win that puts Obama "in a difficult position," said Karin von Hippel, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"We need a credible partner to make things happen," said von Hippel, who was still planning to head to Afghanistan on Monday to serve as an election observer should the Nov. 7 vote be held.

"It's possible that Karzai can be a credible partner, but he really hasn't been in the last few years. And he needs

to change the way he governs to become that."

Hunter and Sen. Joe Lieberman, the Connecticut

independent, called anew for Obama to heed McChrystal's request for additional forces. "It's time to send more help," Lieberman said.

Once a Democrat, the hawkish Lieberman said the Obama administration needs to start working with Karzai, whom he praised.

"I think it's time for us to stop beating up on President Karzai and start building up President Karzai and his government to be the government we need," Lieberman said. "Because they're not the enemy. The enemy is the Taliban."

Valerie Jarrett, another senior White House adviser, said Abdullah's withdrawal would not "complicate" Obama's strategy decision. She did not mention Karzai specifically.

"We're going to work with the leader of the Afghan government and hopefully that's going to improve the state of conditions for the people in Afghanistan, and also help us as we try to bring this war to a close," Jarrett said.

Axelrod and Lieberman spoke on CBS' "Face the Nation," and Jarrett appeared on ABC's "This Week." □



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CALIFORNIA CRASH

Continued from Page B1

Petty Officer First Class Allison Conroy said there was little chance of finding survivors among the seven military personnel aboard the Coast Guard C-130 and the two in the Marine Corps AH-1W Super Cobra helicopter.

"We always hold out some hope, but at this point the Coast Guard has suspended the active search for survivors," Conroy said.

The two aircraft collided Thursday evening as the Coast Guard was searching for a missing boater. The Marine helicopter was flying in formation with another Cobra helicopter and two transports on a nighttime training exercise.

The Coast Guard has begun its investigation into the cause of the crash, Conroy said. Kenneth Claiborne, the father of one of the missing crew members on the plane, said Sunday that his son, Marine 1st Lt. Thomas Claiborne, had been declared deceased. He declined to comment further and referred calls to a Marine spokesperson.

But the mother of Lt. Adam W. Bryant, 28, of Crewe, Va., who was a co-pilot on the Coast Guard plane, said she hadn't given up hope despite the Coast Guard's announcement.

"Miracles do happen," Nina Bryant said Sunday. "Miracles every day."

Rear Adm. Joseph Castillo

said Saturday evening that the chance for finding survivors would be slim, even though the servicemembers had access to heat-retaining drysuits and were in excellent physical shape. Water temperatures were in the low 60s at the time of the collision.

"We don't ever want to suspend the case prematurely, when there may be someone out there," Castillo had said. "But hope gets less every day. My hope today is not what it was yesterday."

The Coast Guard search for the missing boater, David Jines, 50, was called off Saturday evening.

Nine aircraft searched over a 644-square-mile patch of ocean in waters about 2,000 feet deep. Debris from both aircraft was found, but there was no sign of the crew members. All seven aboard the Coast Guard plane are stationed at the Coast Guard Air Station in Sacramento, Calif. Among the other missing crew members on the plane were Lt. Cmdr. Che Barnes, 35, of Capay, Calif.; Chief Petty Officer John F. Seidman, 43, of Carmichael, Calif.; Petty Officer 2nd Class Carl P. Grigonis, 35, of Mayfield Heights, Ohio; Petty Officer 2nd Class Monica L. Beacham, 29, of Decaturville, Tenn.; Petty Officer 2nd Class Jason S. Moletzsky, 26, of Norristown, Pa., and Petty Officer 3rd Class Danny R. Kreder II, 22, from Elm Mott, Texas, drop master.

The C-130 and the Marine Corps AH-1W Super Cobra helicopter collided at 7:10 p.m. Thursday Oct. 29, 2009 as the Coast Guard was conducting a search operation for a missing boater.



Grigonis



Beacham



Moletzsky



Kreder

This undated image provided by the U.S. Coast Guard shows from left: Petty Officer 2nd Class Carl P. Grigonis, 35, from Mayfield Heights, Ohio, navigator; Petty Officer 2nd Class Monica L. Beacham, 29, from Decaturville, Tenn., radio operator; Petty Officer 2nd Class Jason S. Moletzsky, 26, from Norristown, Pa., air crew; and Petty Officer 3rd Class Danny R. Kreder II, 22, from Elm Mott, Texas, drop master. The C-130 and the Marine Corps AH-1W Super Cobra helicopter collided at 7:10 p.m. Thursday Oct. 29, 2009 as the Coast Guard was conducting a search operation for a missing boater.

Associated Press

Maj. Samuel Leigh, 35, of Belgrade, Maine, was the other crew member on board the Marine Corps helicopter. "These brave men and women dedicated their lives to ensuring our safety, and today we are tragically reminded of the dangers they face while protecting our state and nation," California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger said in a statement Sunday. "Maria and I join all Californians in expressing our respect and gratitude for their service and sadness over their deaths." The investigation will be conducted jointly by the Coast Guard and the Marine Corps, Petty Officer Henry Dunphy said Sunday. The Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board will be available in a support role, Dunphy said. The accident happened in airspace uncontrolled by

the FAA and inside a so-called military warning area, which is at times open to civilian aircraft and at times closed for military use, FAA spokesman Ian Gregor said. He did not know the status of the airspace at the time of the crash.

Minutes before the collision, the FAA told the C-130 pilot to begin communicating with military controllers at Naval Air Station North Island in San Diego Bay, but it was not known if the pilot did so, Gregor said.

On Saturday, a top Coast Guard official said he believed the C-130 pilot had spoken with the military controllers before the accident.

Accident investigators who began arriving in San Diego on Saturday would review communications between the pilots and between the pilots and the FAA and military controllers, said Capt. Tom

Farris, commander of the Coast Guard's 11th District. Investigators are also collecting witness statements from those aboard the three other Marine aircraft and will check to see if any distress calls were made.

Calls to Marine Corps investigators were not immediately returned Sunday. The Coast Guard C-130 is a four-engine turboprop transport aircraft. It generally carries a crew of five: two pilots, a navigator, flight engineer and loadmaster. The Coast Guard uses the C-130 for search and rescue missions and cargo and personnel transport. The AH-1 SuperCobra is a twin-engine attack helicopter outfitted with a 20mm cannon that carries a pilot and co-pilot or gunner. The Marines use it for support of ground troops and protection of Navy ships and planes at sea. □

"Miracles do happen," Nina Bryant said Sunday. "Miracles every day."

Rear Adm. Joseph Castillo

Flex spending accounts face hit in health overhaul

By ERICA WERNER

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Those tax-free spending accounts that you and your co-workers use to help pay for dental work, insurance copayments or over-the-counter drugs face a hit under the health overhaul bills in Congress — unless a coalition that includes a powerful union, insurers and others can stop it.

Bills in the House and Senate would cap at \$2,500 an employee's allowable annual contribution to a health care flexible spending account.

There is no federal cap on contributions now, though companies that offer the accounts — more than 80 percent of companies employing 500 or more workers do — typically impose their own limits, usually around \$5,000.

Workers can use the

accounts to save pretax income, which then can be used to reimburse a range of medical expenses, including dental and vision costs, prescription and over-the-counter medications and copays and deductibles — again without being taxed. Capping contributions to the accounts would raise more than \$13 billion over 10 years to help pay for Democratic health care legislation because it would limit the amount of employees' income that is exempt from taxation.

But an unlikely bedfellows coalition that is characteristic of this health care debate — where common interests can unite groups that might typically be at odds — is mobilizing to try to stop the change.

A limited print ad campaign declaring "Flexible spending accounts work!" appeared this past week in Capitol

Hill publications. It's paid for by a group called Save Flexible Spending Plans that is backed by insurers, companies that administer consumer spending accounts and other businesses with a financial stake in the outcome.

The United Food and Commercial Workers International Union endorsed the campaign and its logo appears on the ads. "Our concern is that a cap of \$2,500 is a definite tax on the middle class, particularly those with chronic illnesses," said Jody Dietel, executive director of Save Flexible Spending Plans and chief compliance officer at WageWorks, Inc. of San Mateo, Calif.

Advocates say the typical flexible spending account user makes \$55,000 annually.

Although some lawmakers are sympathetic, the

opposition appears unlikely to succeed in getting the flexible spending account cap out of Congress' health care bill. Unlike the initial Senate proposal, though, House members want to allow the cap to be adjusted so it would rise along with inflation. That would be a welcome improvement for advocates.

Aides to the Senate Finance Committee, which proposed the cap, defend it by saying it would help curb overuse of medical care. Money deposited in the tax-free accounts must be used within 2 1/2 months of the end of the plan year. That may create an incentive for people to spend all the money even if they don't have pressing needs.

In addition, committee spokeswoman Erin Shields said the impact of the cap would be limited. Data compiled by the consulting firm Mercer shows that the average flexible spending arrangement contribution

in 2008 was \$1,385, much lower than the one contemplated by Congress. Mercer said that 27 percent of all employers offered health care spending accounts in 2008 — small businesses are much less likely to do so than large ones — and that 37 percent of eligible workers signed up for the accounts.

"The provision, in addition to helping reduce the overutilization of care, also affects only a limited number of people," Shields said.

Dietel said those averages are no comfort to people using the accounts to cover extreme costs of a chronic condition — say a single dad whose child has a peanut allergy requiring special treatment.

"The reality is that an average is an average," Dietel said. "It's the only tool out there that allows an individual to tailor coverage to their own individual need." □

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Coroner: 6 bodies found were homicide victims

THOMAS J. SHEERAN,
Associated Press Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) — Six women whose badly decomposed bodies were found at the home of a convicted rapist were all victims of homicide, the coroner's office said Sunday. At least five of the women apparently had been strangled, said Powell Caesar, a spokesman for the Cuyahoga County coroner. Decomposition made it difficult to determine how the sixth died, he said.

The bodies "could have been there anywhere from weeks to months to years," Caesar said.

None of the victims has been identified, Caesar said. Two were black, but the race of the others hadn't been determined, he said.

Anthony Sowell, a 50-year-old registered sex offender, was arrested Saturday when officers spotted him walking down the street of his east-side neighborhood. Court records and jail officials had no information about whether he had an attorney. No charges have been filed regarding the bodies.

The gruesome discovery left some in the community concerned about women who they had not seen in a long time. Ida Garrett, 72, remembered a friend who was reported missing in April. "I think one of them is her," Garrett said.

The first bodies were found Thursday night when police went to Sowell's home to arrest him on new charges of rape and felonious assault, but he wasn't there. The woman in that alleged attack survived. She said she knew Sowell and was raped at the house.

Sowell previously spent 15 years in prison for choking and raping a 21-year-old woman who was lured to his bedroom in 1989, police said. As a registered sex offender, Sowell was required to check in regularly at the sheriff's

office, which said he complied. Officers also visited his home, most recently on Sept. 22, just hours before the woman reported being raped there. But since Sowell wasn't on parole or probation, they didn't have the right to enter his house — until Thursday when they had search and arrest warrants.

The three-story house with neat white siding sits in a crowded inner-city neighborhood of mostly older homes, some boarded up, and small corner stores.

The windows of the third floor, where the first two bodies were found, were wide open Sunday as a slight breeze blew. Some neighbors said a bad smell came from the house several months ago, but they thought then that it might be natural gas.

Garrett, the neighbor, walked to church services Sunday just one block from Sowell's home. She said the neighborhood

was relieved by the arrest but worried about those missing, including one of her friends who disappeared six months ago, just after Garrett wished her a happy 43rd birthday. The friend, Nancy Cobbs, lived one street away from the Sowell home. She was reported missing in April, and her family told police they fear she is among the victims. "She seemed to be a very nice, quiet girl. I've known her since she was a teenager," Garrett said.

Clovice Ramsey, minister at All Nations Deliverance Ministries in nearby Maple Heights, held a "PEACE" sign on a corner within sight of the Sowell home and said the discovery of the bodies had damaged people's trust in law enforcement.

"They don't see the system working for them," Ramsey said. Sowell "is not being rehabilitated. They are not keeping a watch on him. I just

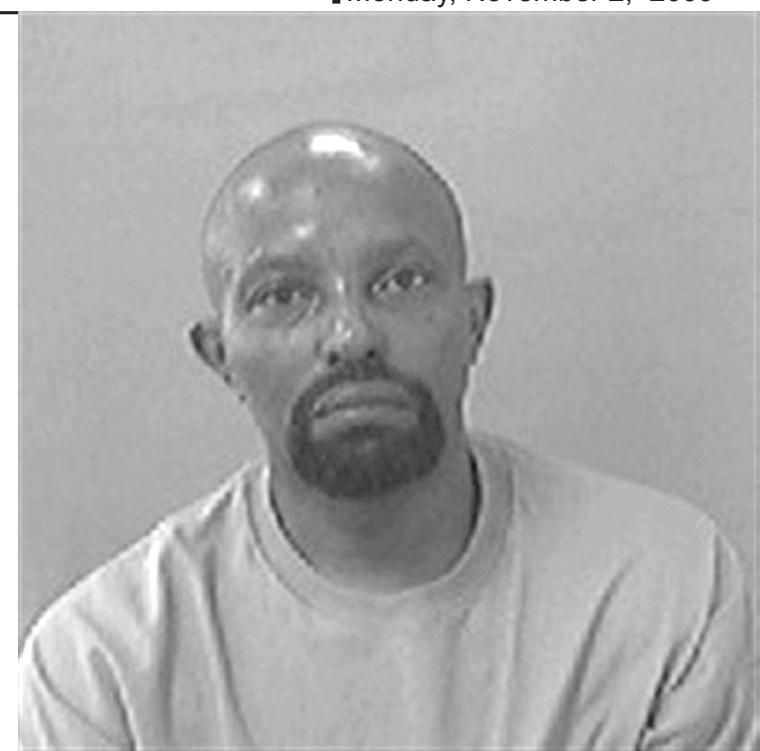
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This undated photo released by the Cleveland Police Department shows Anthony E. Sowell. Police in Cleveland have arrested Sowell, a convicted rapist after they found as many as six bodies at his house.

Associated Press

feel that when the systems fails, the people give up. They give up on the system, and they give up on the God they can't see."

Sowell often walked around his neighborhood asking for money and looking for scrap metal to sell, neighbors said. He returned to the family home in 2005 after his release from prison. The house was

owned by two of Sowell's relatives, including a woman — described by neighbors as either Sowell's stepmother or aunt — who kept it up.

Neighbors said the woman moved into a nursing home after Sowell was released from prison. Teresa Hicks, a neighbor, said people feared that she might be dead. Police were looking into her status.

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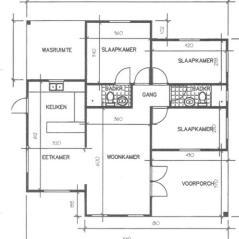


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Ex-soldiers want to reveal Chile dirty war secrets

EVA VERGARA

MICHAEL WARREN

Associated Press Writers

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP) — Hundreds of former military draftees rallying outside Chile's presidential palace were asked Sunday to come forward and reveal crimes they committed and witnessed during Gen. Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship. The draftees have long feared that if they name names and reveal where bodies are buried, they will face prosecution by the courts or retaliation by those who ordered them to torture and kill.

But now the information they once promised to carry to their graves has become both a heavy psychological burden and a bargaining chip. By offering confessions, some of these now-aging men believe they can improve their chances of getting government pensions and mental health care.

"Perhaps today is the day when the moment has come, for us to describe what we saw and what we suffered inside the military bases, the things that we witnessed and that we did," said Fernando Mellado, who leads the Santiago chapter of the Former Soldiers of 1973. Mellado told his fellow former soldiers that he's made little

progress with lawmakers as he lobbies for military draftees to be recognized as victims of the dictatorship, in part because no one understands what they went through.

"Our human rights were also violated," he declared. "The moment has come for former military draftees to tell our wives, our families, the politicians, the society, the country and the whole world about the brutalities they subjected us to. I believe the moment has come for us to speak, for our personal redemption."

Mellado has been working with similar groups across Chile to figure out whether and how to turn over the information. He urged those in the crowd to provide their evidence to him, and promised to protect their anonymity.

Of the 8,000 people drafted as teenagers from Santiago alone in the tumultuous year when Pinochet overthrew Salvador Allende's government and cemented his hold on power, Mellado believes "between 20 and 30 percent are willing to talk."

A small crowd among the former draftees was inspired enough by Mellado's call to immediately approach Associated Press journalists at the rally.

"They made me torture — I am a torturer — because they threatened me that if I didn't torture, they would kill me," volunteered Jorge Acevedo. He said several prisoners died when he applied electricity during torture sessions, and that their bodies may have been dumped in abandoned mines at the Cerro Chena prisoner camp.

Chilean security forces killed 3,186 people during the dictatorship, including 1,197 who were made to disappear, according to an official count. In nearly two decades of democracy since then, less than 8 percent of the disappeared have been found, said Viviana Diaz of the Assembly of Family Members of the Disappeared Detainees. Hundreds of recovered remains, some just bone fragments, have yet to be identified. Only those who buried the bodies know where other common graves lie. Diaz, for one, hopes the former draftees do start talking, even if they do so in a way that avoids prosecution.

Chilean law allows for a "just following orders" defense if people submit to the mercy of the courts, naming names and providing information that could help resolve some of the thousands of crimes



In this Sept. 11, 2008 file photo, relatives of dissidents who disappeared under the dictatorship of Gen. Augusto Pinochet hold their pictures during the 35th anniversary of the military coup led by Pinochet in Santiago. Hundreds of former draftees are ready to reveal where bodies are buried and other details about human rights violations during Gen. Pinochet's dictatorship, but they want guarantees first that they won't be put in jail or suffer other repercussions. Pinochet overthrew President Salvador Allende in 1973 and established a repressive regime that lasted until 1990.

Associated Press

committed under Pinochet's 1973-1990 rule.

The defense "theoretically applies and exists" in Chile, and judges can even have people testify in secret, said attorney Hiram Villagra, who represents families of the dead and disappeared.

But most former soldiers fear the consequences for themselves and their families. Some worry that judges who rose through the ranks under Pinochet might protect their former superior officers instead. Mellado maintains

that the former draftees also are victims — forced into service as minors and made to do unspeakable things — and that many now want to get it off their chests.

One confessed to shooting an entire family. Another — now an alcoholic who sleeps in the street in Santiago — said he was forced to drown a 7-year-old boy in a barrel of hardening plaster. Others describe harrowing torture sessions, and loading bodies onto helicopters to be dumped at sea. □



Former U.S. president Bill Clinton waves to thousands of ethnic Albanians, as he stand beside a statue of himself, in Pristina, Kosovo, on Sunday, Nov. 1, 2009.

NEBI QENA

Associated Press Writer

PRISTINA, Kosovo (AP) — Thousands of ethnic Albanians braved low temperatures and a cold wind in Kosovo's capital Pristina to welcome former President Bill Clinton on Sunday as he attended the unveiling of an 11-foot statue of himself on a key boulevard that also bears his name.

Clinton is celebrated as a hero by Kosovo's ethnic Albanian

majority for launching NATO's bombing campaign against Yugoslavia in 1999 that stopped the brutal Serb forces' crackdown on independence-seeking ethnic Albanians.

This is his first visit to Kosovo since it declared independence from Serbia last year.

Many waved American, Albanian and Kosovo flags and chanted "USA!" as the former president climbed

on top of a podium with his poster in the background reading "Kosovo honors a hero."

Former President Clinton unveils statue in Kosovo

on top of a podium with his poster in the background reading "Kosovo honors a hero."

Some peeked out of balconies and leaned on window sills to get a better view of Clinton from their apartment blocks. To thunderous applause Clinton waved to the crowd as the red cover was pulled off from the statue.

The statue is placed on top of a white-tiled base, in the middle of a tiny square, surrounded by communist-era buildings.

"I never expected that anywhere, someone would make such a big statue of me," Clinton said of the gold-sprayed statue weighing a ton.

He also addressed Kosovo's 120-seat assembly, encouraging them to forgive

and move on from the violence of the past.

The statue portrays Clinton with his left arm raised and holding a portfolio bearing his name and the date when NATO started bombing Yugoslavia, on March 24, 1999.

An estimated 10,000 ethnic Albanians were killed during the Kosovo crackdown and about 800,000 were forced out of their homes. They returned home after NATO-led peacekeepers moved in following 78 days of bombing.

Leta Krasniqi, an ethnic Albanian, said the statue was the best way to express the ethnic Albanians' gratitude for Clinton's role in making Kosovo a state.

"This is a big day," Krasniqi, 25 said. "I live nearby and

I'm really excited that I will be able to see the statue of such a big friend of ours every day."

Clinton last visited Kosovo in 2003 when he received an honorary university degree. His first visit was in 1999 — months after some 6,000 U.S. troops were deployed in the NATO-led peacekeeping mission here.

Some 1,000 American soldiers are still based in Kosovo as part of NATO's 14,000-strong peacekeeping force. Police in Kosovo upped security measures ahead of Bill Clinton's arrival by adding deploying more traffic police and special police. NATO officials said the peacekeepers were also on alert, although no additional security measures were taken. □

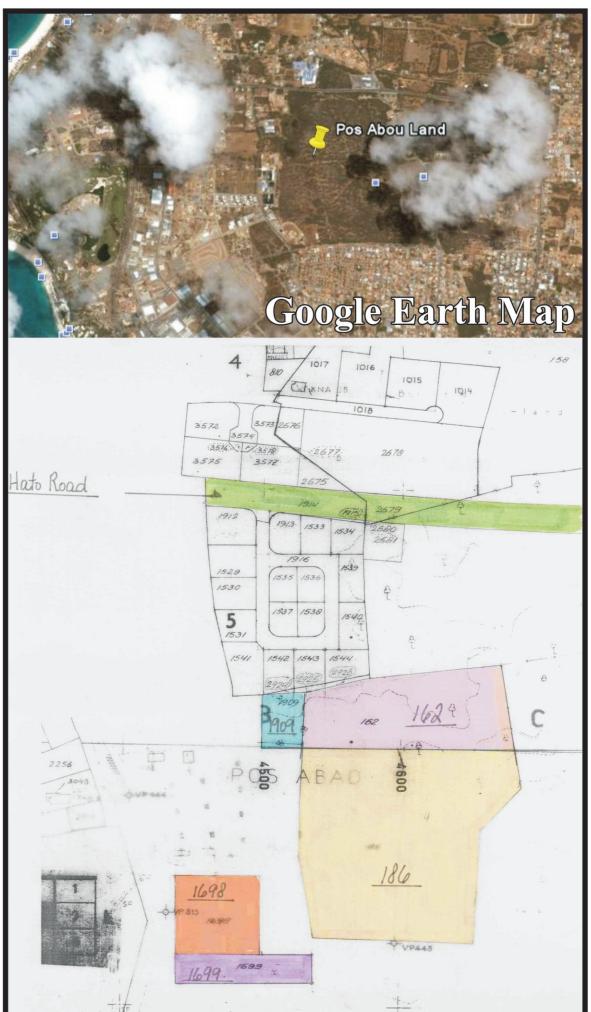
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Rescue under way after boat sinks off Australia

SYDNEY (AP) — An urgent search and rescue mission was under way Monday for about two dozen people missing after their boat sank in open seas far off Australia.

A merchant ship that responded to a distress call managed to pluck 17 survivors from the Indian Ocean late Sunday and was searching for others, Australia's Home Affairs Minister Brendan O'Connor said.

About 40 people were believed to be aboard the boat when went down near the Cocos Islands, sparsely-populated atolls about 1,500 miles northwest of the Australian coast and about 800 miles south of Indonesia.

O'Connor said it was too early to say whether those

on board were asylum seekers trying to reach Australia, though aspects of the emergency—such as an unseaworthy boat carrying so many people in waters sometimes used by human traffickers — signaled that may be the case.

There has been a surge of boats carrying asylum seekers toward Australia. Some 35 boats carrying about 1,770 asylum seekers have arrived in Australia waters this year, mostly from Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran and Sri Lanka.

Many of them pay thousands of dollars to people smugglers who put them to sea in leaky boats from Indonesia and sail south. Most end up caught by customs authorities and detained in an immigration camp on remote Christmas



Islands while their refugee applications are assessed, a process that can take months or years.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority received distress signals on Sunday

from the boat, and the authority asked any vessels in the area to respond.

The merchant ship LNG Pioneer arrived in the area late Sunday and deployed life rafts and began plucking

people from the water, authority spokeswoman Rhianne Robson said.

An Australian military plane was on its way to the area to search for more survivors. □

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NFL Roundup

Favre shakes off boos, Vikings beat Packers 38-26

GREEN BAY, Wisconsin (AP) — Brett Favre sliced up his former team Sunday, leading the Minnesota Vikings to a 38-26 win over Green Bay Packers, the team that cast him aside.

If walking out to waves of loud jeers from his former fans threw Favre off his game, it didn't last long.

Despite being jeered repeatedly by Packers fans who once cheered his every move, Favre completed 17 of 28 passes for 244 yards and four touchdowns.

The Vikings, with seven wins and a loss, took a firm hold on the NFC North standings.

Rookie receiver Percy Harvin caught five passes for 84 yards and a touchdown and had five returns for 175 yards.

The Vikings' defense roughed up Favre's successor, Aaron Rodgers, sacking him six times. But with the Packers (4-3) on the verge of getting



Minnesota Vikings quarterback Brett Favre raises his arms to the Lambeau Field crowd after the Vikings beat the Green Bay Packers 38-26 in an NFL football game Sunday, Nov. 1, 2009, in Green Bay, Wis.

Associated Press

routed, Rodgers rebounded with three second-half touchdowns.

Favre left the field surrounded by cameras, pumping his fist to a mix of cheers and boos as he jogged down the tunnel.

Despite the final score, it was an awkward homecoming for Favre, whose high-profile standoff with the front office split the loyalties of Packers fans last summer.

Rams 17, Lions 10

At Detroit, Steven Jackson's 25-yard touchdown run with 1:38 left ended St. Louis' 17-game losing streak, helping the Rams avoid match their worst start in the club's history.

They also ended talk about joining Detroit, which has one win this season, as the only teams in NFL history to have an 0-16 season.

St. Louis hadn't won since beating Dallas on Oct. 19, 2008.

Continued on Page B12



Sheikha Hind Bint Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, daughter of the Emir of Qatar, left, presents the trophy to Serena Williams of the United States after winning the singles final against Venus Williams of the United States at the WTA Tennis Championships, in Doha, Qatar Sunday, Nov. 1, 2009.

Associated Press

MATTIAS KAREN
AP Sports Writer

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — Serena Williams bested big sister Venus again Sunday, winning 6-2, 7-6 (4) in the season-ending Sony Ericsson

Championships final.

Serena broke twice in the first set and lost just seven points on serve in her last match of the year. She looked sharper than Venus in every facet of a match that featured few

Serena beats Venus in WTA championships final

long rallies and little of the spectacular tennis the two have provided in some of their previous meetings.

Serena sealed the match with a crosscourt forehand winner and celebrated with a simple fist pump before hugging her sister at the net.

"It feels great," said Serena, who also won the WTA Tour's season-ending event in 2001. "I totally didn't expect to come here and win."

After playing four late-night three-setters this week in temperatures hovering around 30 C (86 F), Venus seemed to run out of steam in the final. Serena held five of her last seven service games at love and lost just one point in each of the other two.

"I don't think I returned as well as I wanted to," said Venus, the defending champion. "Sometimes I made her service games a bit too easy."

It was Serena's fourth straight win over her sister. She also beat Venus in the round-robin stage of the Doha tournament, the Wimbledon final and the semifinals in Miami this year. She leads their head-to-head record 13-10.

"Playing a final against Venus is really tough," Serena said. "Even though she wasn't really feeling great, she kept hitting every ball back."

It was Serena's third tournament win of the season after taking the Wimbledon and Australian Open titles.

"I haven't won a tournament

that wasn't a Grand Slam in a while, so that was even more exciting," she said. "My losing streak in (other) tournaments is over."

Serena pocketed \$1.55 million for the win after finishing the event undefeated — bringing her total prize money for the year to a record \$6.19 million. Justine Henin held the previous record of \$5.43 million in 2007.

She also clinched the year-end No. 1 ranking earlier this week after Dinara Safina of Russia pulled out injured in her first match.

The tournament features the eight top-ranked women in the world divided into two groups, with the semifinalists decided by a round-robin stage. □

McMurray snaps 86-race winless streak

JENNA FRYER

AP Auto Racing Writer

TALLADEGA, Alabama (AP) — Jamie McMurray was the unlikely winner of an uncharacteristically dull race at Talladega Superspeedway, where a ban on bump-drafting forced most competitors to treat the event as a slow Sunday drive.

The day started with a stern warning from NASCAR president Mike Helton against the aggressive driving that has turned Talladega into the most exciting track on the circuit. What followed was an anesthetized first 450 miles, with long periods of single-file traffic and no driver willing to defy NASCAR's order not to bump through the corners.

But the action picked up with roughly 20 laps remaining, and with it came the typical Talladega mayhem. Ryan Newman's harrowing crash with five laps to go left him upside down in the grass, and NASCAR needed a stoppage of almost 13 minutes to cut him from the car.

That set up a two-lap sprint to the finish, and that was halted when championship contender Mark Martin went flipping across the track in his own spectacular crash.

The race ended under caution, with McMurray in Victory Lane for the first time in 86 races. Jimmie Johnson, meanwhile, likely wrapped up his NASCAR-record fourth-consecutive championship because of all the late action. Because Johnson spent most of the race around the back of the pack, he was stuck back in the mid-20s when Newman crashed. Crew chief Chad Knaus sensed a lengthy delay and quickly called Johnson in for gas — a decision that may have clinched the title.

When cars ahead of him in the running order began to run out of gas because of the red-flag delay, Johnson vaulted up in the standings. The final finishing order showed him in eighth, but he was adamant he finished sixth.

After a lengthy review, Johnson was indeed credited with a sixth-place finish that stretched his lead in the standings to 184 points over Martin with three races remaining.

"From where we were with the red flag to where we finished, I'm still in shock," Johnson said.

"I can't believe that it worked out. I can't believe that many guys ran out of fuel and put themselves in that position."

It was the final hurdle in Johnson's path because his 17.7 average finish at Talladega is his worst of the 10 races in the Chase for the Sprint Cup championship. He had dreaded Sunday's race because of the unknowns that come with the horsepower-sapping restrictor plates that are used to control the high speeds at the 2.66-mile track.

"I was so concerned about this race," he admitted. "I thought I was going to lose points with about three or four (laps) to go. So to have it turn around and lead with points over the guys, I didn't expect it."

Aside from Johnson and McMurray, who snapped an 86-race winless streak dating to Daytona in July 2007, few drivers were happy with the final outcome.

That's usually the way it goes at Daytona and Talladega, the two places where the plates are used and the final results rarely reflect what actually happened. Bump-drafting has become a necessary evil as drivers jockey for position in the tight packs, conditions five-time Talladega winner Dale Earnhardt Jr. said left them "at the mercy of the whole field.

"I don't think it's acceptable. I feel lucky that I didn't wreck," he said after an 11th-place finish.

"We show up to bust our (butt) to get our cars to handle right and do right everywhere else, but when you come here, you just sit in the bus, wait for the damn race to start and see what your number is at the end of the deal. It's a lottery." □

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Jamie McMurray celebrates after winning the AMP Energy 500 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series auto race Sunday, Nov. 1, 2009, at Talladega Superspeedway in Talladega, Ala.

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Fisher beats Kim to win World Match Play final**PAUL LOGOTHETIS**

AP Sports Writer

CASARES, Spain (AP)

— Ross Fisher won the 36-hole World Match Play Championship final on Sunday with a convincing 4 and 3 victory over Anthony Kim. Fisher had an eagle at the par-4 22nd hole and birdie at the par-5 23rd to put him 3-up at the Finca Cortesin golf course. Kim won the next hole but then missed putts on the 25th and 26th holes. Kim later missed several hole-winning putts down the stretch.

“Fortunately the putter finally got a little bit hot,” said Fisher, who became the fourth Englishman to win the event. “It was slow to get going but when I needed some crucial putts there were some really good putts I holed today.”

Fisher, who was sharp around the greens early in the day, never trailed his American opponent as the first 18 holes were played in cool, overcast conditions before the sun came out in the afternoon.

“It was tough. This course is very demanding, not only mentally but physically,” said Fisher, whose 126 holes completed included a playoff against Masters champion Angel Cabrera on Saturday. “Fitness was probably a big aspect.” Kim tried to rally on the second 18, putting his drive within 15 feet on the 24th hole and then making the birdie putt, but he couldn’t hold it together around the greens, liping out from about a foot on the 26th.

Trailing by three holes with eight to play, Kim just couldn’t get his putter rolling.

“It was an up-and-down battle all day and I never seemed to get anything going. That’s what cost me today,” Kim said. “I never seemed to make a string of three or four birdies in a row.”

Fisher, who won for the first time this season, earned €750,000 (\$1.1 million) for the victory and jumped into the top five in the European Tour money standings.

He called it one of his best rounds as a pro.

“Obviously, it’s a huge stepping stone. To win it is huge and it’s given me a massive confidence boost,” Fisher said. “The only thing missing this year was a win. This kind of is a big cherry.”

The 24-year-old Kim, who would have become the youngest-ever winner, improved his chances of playing in the season-ending Dubai World Championship by earning €450,000 (\$666,000) to move into the top 35 in the money list.

“I gave it all I had but unfortunately it wasn’t good enough,” Kim said. “Of course I’m disappointed but what can you do? He played great.”

Robert Allenby beat Cabrera in the 18-hole third-place match. The Australian, who won the 18th hole to force sudden death, sank an 18-foot eagle putt in the playoff to secure the €250,000 (\$368,000) prize. Cabrera won €200,000 (\$296,000). □

NFL ROUNDUP*Continued from Page B10*

At Indianapolis, the Colts won their 16th straight regular-season game and Jim Caldwell became the first rookie coach since the NFL merger to open his career with seven consecutive wins.

Peyton Manning topped 300 yards and got credit for another Colts rally, but it was Joseph Addai who won it. The fourth-year running back threw a 22-yard touchdown pass to Reggie Wayne early in the final quarter to give the Colts their only lead.

The Colts are the last unbeaten team in the AFC for the fourth time in five years.

Ravens 30, Broncos 7

At Baltimore, the Ravens handed Denver its first loss of the season.

Rookie Lardarius Webb returned the second-half kickoff 95 yards for a touchdown, and the Ravens ended a three-game losing streak with a surprisingly easy victory.

It was Denver’s first loss under rookie head coach Josh McDaniels.

At Nashville, Vince Young threw for a touchdown in his first start since the 2008 season opener and Chris Johnson set a franchise record by rushing for 228 yards as the Titans won their first game of the season. Tampa Bay, which had a bye this week, remains the only winless team.

In other NFL games it was, St. Louis 17, Detroit 10; Miami 30, N.Y. Jets 25; Dallas 38, Seattle 17; Chicago 30, Cleveland 6; Baltimore 30, Denver 7; Houston 31, Buffalo 10; Indianapolis 18, San Francisco 14; Philadelphia 40, N.Y. Giants 17; San Diego 24, Oakland 16; Tennessee 30, Jacksonville 13; Minnesota 38, Green Bay 26; and Carolina 34, Arizona 21. □

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CLASSIFIED

B13 Monday, November 2, 2009

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ORANJESTAD
SAN NICOLAAS

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Botica na warda

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Warda Polis 582-4000
BGD Oranjestad 582-8877

San Nicolas

Ambulance 584-5050
Warda Polis 584-5000
BGD San Nicolas 584-1606
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Secretaría laboral de EEUU verificará acuerdos en Honduras

TEGUCIGALPA (AP) - La Organización de los Estados Americanos (OEA) anunció el domingo que la secretaria de Trabajo de Estados Unidos Hilda Solís y el ex presidente chileno Ricardo Lagos serán los dos representantes extranjeros que verificarán el cumplimiento de los acuerdos en la crisis política hondureña.

Solís y Lagos arribarán el martes a Tegucigalpa, informó el secretario general de la OEA José Miguel Insulza desde Washington. Los dos miembros se sumarán a los designados por el presidente derrocado Manuel Zelaya y el gobernante de facto Roberto Micheletti.

Zelaya designó a su diplomático ante la ONU Jorge Arturo Reina, mientras que Micheletti al negociador Arturo Corrales. El acuerdo alcanzado el jueves por las partes en la crisis y que tiene como punto central que el Congreso vote por la restitución o no de Zelaya, estableció que la comisión

de verificación se conforme el lunes. El acto fue impulsado decididamente por la administración del presidente Barack Obama, que prometió respaldar los comicios generales del 29 de noviembre, al igual que la OEA.

“Si esto no se corrige ahora, las próximas elecciones van a estar empañadas profundamente y no van a ser admitidas por la comunidad internacional”, advirtió Reina al arribar el domingo.

“La reinstalación del presidente va a significar un hecho en la historia del país. Lo votaron militares y lo volvió a poner el pueblo”, agregó.

La comisión tiene como tarea inmediata velar por la conformación e instalación del gobierno de unidad y reconciliación nacional, un paso que según el acuerdo debe cristalizarse a más tardar el 5 de noviembre. El gobierno de unidad debe entregar el poder al triunfador de la contienda presidencial, el 27 de enero.

El Congreso, que decretó la destitución



El presidente depuesto de Honduras, Manuel Zelaya, al centro, habla rodeado de guardaespaldas y simpatizantes en la embajada brasileña. Tegucigalpa, sábado 31 de octubre de 2009. (AP foto/Esteban Felix)

de Zelaya y designó a su entonces líder Micheletti como presidente interino del país, ahora tiene la pelota de su lado y

debe llamar a sesiones para debatir el futuro del líder derrocado, lo cual hasta el domingo no se había dado. □



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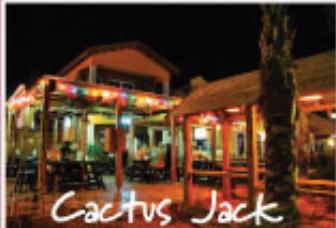


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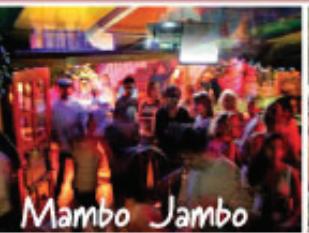
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